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Men Who Dared

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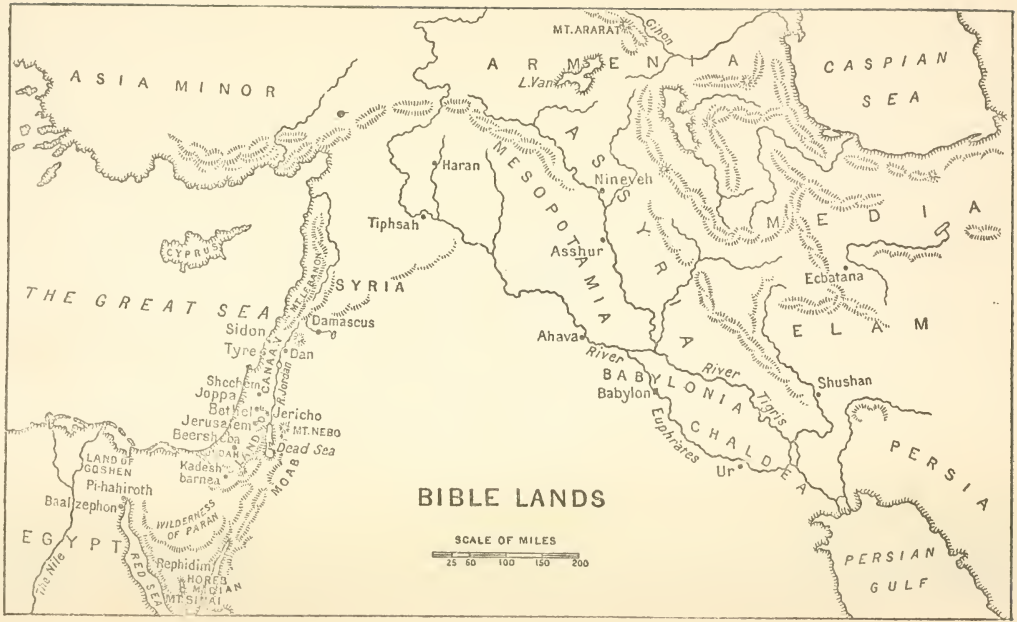
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MEN WHO DARED

STUDIES IN OLD TESTAMENT MANHOOD

CHARLES GALLAUDET TRUMBULL

TEACHERS' EDITION

1907
Young Men's Christian Association Press
New York

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
	How to Teach These Lessons	vii
	Books for the Teacher	xiii
I.	A Talk About Heroes	1
II.	A Sailor Who Dared to Take Ridicule	5
III.	An Unselfish Fighter Who Trusted	11
IV.	The Man Who Would Not Fight	19
V.	A Crippled Hero Who Surrendered	25
VI.	A Boy Who Didn't Believe in Luck	33
VII.	A Man Who Dared the Impossible	39
VIII.	The General Who Captured the Promised Land	45
IX.	The Conqueror Who Would Not be King	51
X.	The Giant-Killer Who Spared His Enemy	57
XI.	A Prince Who Was His Rival's Friend	63
XII.	The King Who Made a Hard Choice	69
XIII.	The Prophet Who Shamed a God	73
XIV.	The Man Who Used His Power for Others	79
XV.	A Captive Who Refused to be Scared	85
XVI.	The Man Who Would Not Use Soldiers	91
XVII.	A Wall Builder Who Kept His Wits About Him	97
XVIII.	Sixteen Men Who Dared	105

Maps

Bible Lands	ii
Land of Canaan	vi
The Red Sea Trap	43
Ezra's Journey from Babylon to Jerusalem	94

LAND OF CANAAN
SCALE OF MILES
5 10 20 30 40
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
PHOENICIA
MT. HERMON
SYRIA
R. Abana
Hobah
DAMASCUS
R. Pharpar
Dan
THE GREAT SEA
R. Kishon
MT. CARMEL
MT. TABOR
Sea of Chinnereth
Shunem
MOREH
Jezreel
Spr. of Harod
MT. GILBOA
Dothan
Samaria
MT. EBAL
Shechem
MT. GERIZIM
Penuel
R. Jabbok
Ford
Jordan River
Plain of the Jordan
Gilgal
Shiloh
Gibeah
Bethel
Lodebar
Migron
Ai
R. Cherith
Beth-horon
Gibeon
Jericho
JERUSALEM
Ramah
VAL. OF ELAH
Azekah
Gomorrah
Bethlehem
Makkedah
PHILISTINES
Hebron
Gaza
WILDERNESS OF ZIPH
R. Arnon
Socoh
VAL. OF GERAR
DEAD SEA
Sodom
Beersheba
Vale of Siddim
MOAB
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HOW TO TEACH THESE LESSONS

It is hard for us to think of the leading men of Old Testament times as flesh and blood folks who were very much like ourselves. They were heroes; and heroes are different from ordinary people. But we shall never get the real message of these men's lives until we learn to know them in their likeness to ourselves. Strip them of the unreality that they have to most of us, and we find that their heroism consisted in doing commonplace things in a way out of the ordinary, but a way open to all of us if we will pay the price that they paid.

Young people can come to know the men of Old Testament times in this intimate way if they are simply guided into it a little; and young people are likely to be as surprised as older folks to learn how much those old-time characters had in common with themselves, and how the experiences of Bible times are being lived over again, day by day, in schoolroom and schoolyard and home and on the street.

To bring about this intimate and friendly acquaintance between the leading men of the Old Testament and schoolboys of the present day—boys of from twelve to fifteen years of age—is the purpose of this course. Definite daily home work is furnished for assigning to the boys, simple in character, but intended to stimulate them to think for themselves.

Two results will be sought for in each study: (1) An intimate acquaintance with the man himself, his place in God's plan, his achievement and the obstacles confronted and overcome; and (2) a clear un-

derstanding of the principle or quality in his life that brought him success.

Purpose of the Teaching Hints

The teaching hints in each chapter (headed, after the first chapter, "Teaching the Lesson in Class") are intended to suggest a plan and a method for the teacher's conduct of that session. In order to furnish such teaching-material in the most direct way, this section of each chapter has been presented from the standpoint of the teacher as addressing the class. Such colloquial phraseology is used as a teacher would naturally and effectively employ in talking to a class of boys; and the form of address, in the second person, has in view the members of the class as listeners and participants.

For participants the pupils must be, if any teaching at all is to be done. Never let the class hour be taken up wholly, or even chiefly, by the teacher's talk. Only as the pupils give back something will they hold what they receive. Questions, therefore, are freely used in the teaching hints, and the class should be encouraged to talk freely, in discussion and even in challenge of the teacher's views. Especially should the pupils be urged to bring up in class any questions or points that they have found difficult in their "Home Work" during the week.

The "Home Work for the Pupils" explains itself. But one important and strategic point may well be noted: make it *home work for the teacher* as well, and let your pupils know that you are doing so. It will be a real bond of comradeship between teacher and class for the latter to realize that their teacher

is doing, day by day, exactly the same work that they are asked to do.

Getting the Pupils to Work

There are two ways of giving the pupils their home work. The obvious one is to put the pupil's text-book into the hands of each boy at the close of the first session of the class (after giving the "Talk about Heroes"), and asking that each week's readings be followed day by day until the course is completed. The other way, which has its advantages, is to give out no complete books at all, but to cut out and distribute only a single week's work at a time, repeating this week by week. This will keep up an element of sustained interest during the course, as the boys will never know what character is coming next; and it will perhaps induce regular attendance to secure the new list of readings (though it would be advisable to mail the needed page to absentees). When the pupils' books are thus cut up for week-by-week distribution, it would be desirable, at the completion of the course, for each pupil to secure (by purchase or by presentation from the teacher) a new complete copy of the book for permanent preservation.

The Teacher's Home Preparation

Of course no teacher will limit his own preparation to the material thus given in the pupils' daily home work. He needs all that and more. The Bible material given at the head of each chapter in the teacher's text-book is intentionally fuller than that given to the pupils, and should be carefully read by the teacher.

In addition, the well-equipped teacher will have a good Bible dictionary, a concordance, and a help to the study of the geography of Bible lands. Several such books are named on page xiii. The Bible dictionary will furnish needed information about the characters studied, and other material richly illuminative of Bible manners and customs. Valuable help to the enrichment of the teaching will be found in as full a knowledge as possible of the geography of the scene of action each week. Moreover, the concordance and the dictionary may very properly be at hand in the classroom, for immediate reference in settling points under discussion. It is well to familiarize the pupils with working-tools of this sort, which they themselves may be led to desire for their own Bible study; and one or two good wall maps in the classroom, for occasional use, are also desirable.

Both teacher and pupils should have each his own individual copy of the Bible. The American Standard Revision is strongly recommended, not only because it is the most accurate English translation of the original texts in existence, and therefore brings us closer to the real meaning of the Bible itself, but also because it does this in English which is so much more intelligible to a present-day reader than is the English of three centuries ago (that of the King James, or "Authorized" Version of 1611). It is to be hoped that both teacher and class will secure the best style of edition that can be afforded, so that it may last for years. It is poor economy to buy a cheap edition of the Bible.

Never be afraid of accumulating a great deal more

material on a lesson than you can hope to use in teaching that lesson. It is just such reserve, unused material that gives power to what you do use. It is like the powder back of the ammunition. A teacher who has only just enough material to see him through is unfitted indeed, and the class will find it out.

Make Your Own Plan

But the material that has been gathered must be systematized for use, according to a carefully outlined plan of teaching. Such a plan will be found to underlie every lesson in the teaching hints which this volume gives; but those hints are intended to be only suggestive, not to be rigidly followed, and, of course, are never to be read aloud in the class, nor used verbatim. Every teacher should adapt them and improve upon them for his own class. Nor do they attempt to cover all the material which the boys have used in the daily home work—there are important points in that which should be touched upon in class.

A lively use of the imagination is one secret of success in teaching. It enables us to see the men and the scenes that we are bringing before the class, and we must do that to make our teaching grip. It has been said that a person cannot be dull in describing a railroad accident that he has seen. We must *see* these Bible persons and places if we would escape being dull to our classes; and to do that we must fairly live in the atmosphere of the chapters that we study, day by day, until the old life has become almost part of our life.

Effectiveness of the Picture Method

A set of handsome half-tone pictures has been prepared to accompany this course, which, if a class can afford the small additional cost of ten cents a set for each pupil, may furnish one of the most interesting and permanent features of the boys' study, by the following simple plan:

Provide each boy with a blank book, of large enough page-size to take one of the pictures and allow considerable space besides. At the top of the page, have each boy, before coming to class every week, write the title of the chapter that is to be studied in class, adding the hero's name, and the Bible chapters that have been covered by the week's "Home Work." The boys will bring these books into class, and at the end of the lesson you will hand them each a copy of the picture for the day. This they will slip into their blank books, and, upon going home, they will paste the picture neatly into position, and under it write from memory, in their own words, the life of the man that they have just studied. The following week they are to submit their books to you, and you might read aloud to the class, as a special honor, the best story, or read them in rotation one a week, week after week. There is nothing so effective as "writing it out," to clinch things in the boys' memories,—and the pictures will be an inducement to them to do so. They might label the blank books, "My Own Hero Book."

Frequent Reviews

Reviews may advisedly be given several times during the course, instead of being left for a single

session only, at the end. Lesson XVIII gives a variety of review methods, some of which could be used in reviews during the course, covering three or four weeks each time, to be followed also by a general review of the entire course in conclusion.

Moreover, a written examination is conducted every year in this and other Bible study courses by the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations. Full particulars will be sent by the Committee, upon request (address Religious Work Department, 124 East 28th Street). It may be a healthy stimulus to your class to prepare at the outset to take this examination.

While this course has been prepared primarily with boys' classes in mind, it is hoped that it may be found useful in girls' classes as well. Girls are, as a rule, quite as ready to be interested in hero-worship as boys.

Books for the Teacher

The American Standard Version of the Revised Bible. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons. From 35 cents to $12, according to style and size.

Walker's Comprehensive Concordance to the Holy Scriptures. Boston: The Pilgrim Press. $1.25.

Davis' Dictionary of the Bible (with Maps and Plans). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. $2.25.

For interesting chemical object lessons, illustrating spiritual truth, which could be used from time to time during this course, see Mr. Eugene C. Foster's book of such experiments. (The Sunday School Times Company, 50 cents.)

For a grasp of Bible Geography, either Townsend MacCoun's "The Holy Land in Geography and in History" (Revell, $1.65) or John B. Calkin's "Historical Geography of Bible Lands" (The Westminster Press, $1) is recommended.

Any of the above books may be ordered from the publishers of this course, the Y. M. C. A. Press, 124 East 28th Street, New York.

I

A TALK ABOUT HEROES

What boy here has ever seen a hero? Good; what was his name? Has anybody else ever seen a hero? Who was he? Let's write down the names of all the heroes you have ever seen. Tom, here's a pencil; you write them on this tablet of paper. When the rest of you are through, I am going to give the name of a hero I once saw.

Now, then, can you think of the names of any heroes that you ever heard about, living or dead, but that you have never seen? Will, you keep this list on this other tablet. Not too fast; give Will a chance. You've all heard of more heroes than you have seen, haven't you? Let me add one to your list: John G. Paton. No one ever heard of him? We shall find out why I named him, a little later.

But now for a hard question. Don't try to answer it quickly when I ask it. Stop and think a moment. I'll give you half a minute by my watch before any one is to answer. Ready: *What is a hero?* I will write down your answers myself, this time.

Before we talk about these answers you have given, let me tell you what the word "hero" comes from. It comes from an old Greek word spelled almost exactly the same way,—*Herōs.* And that word meant, first, any *freeman.* Then it was used more for soldiers, fighters; and then, as people looked back upon that age, they began to think of the *freeman fighters,* or heroes, as exalted above the race of

common men. And the dictionary of to-day will tell you that a hero is "a man distinguished for valor, fortitude, or bold enterprise"; one having "great courage, or exceptionally noble or manly qualities."

Now let us get up our own definition of a hero, out of what we have just learned. What was the first and simplest meaning of the Greek word? *"A freeman,"*—we'll start with that. Then he was a fighter; is fighting usually hard or easy? We'll add then, *"who does hard things."* But the dictionary said something about "noble" and "manly"; and not everything hard is manly. It may be hard to jump off Brooklyn Bridge or ride in a six-days' bicycle race, but there's nothing very noble or manly in either. So let us add, *"that are worth while."* Now we have a definition of just ten words. Can any one give it? A hero is: *A freeman who does hard things that are worth while.* We 'll say it all together three times.

Put your men alongside this definition, now, and see if they measure up. Tom, read the list, slowly, and if any of you think that any name there is not a hero, by our new definition, sing out!

Will, read your list now, and we'll put them to the test in the same way.

I am responsible for John G. Paton being there. But instead of telling you why I named him, I am going to ask Fred to take this book home with him ("Autobiography of John G. Paton," First part, pages 266, 267, 318) and read the pages where I have put in markers (he can read as much more as he wants to), and tell us next week enough about Paton for us to decide whether he had any heroism.

One other thing. Who will volunteer to make a handsome big sign, on a strip of cloth, say ten feet long, of our definition of a hero, and bring it here next week, so that we can fasten it up on the wall before us and keep it always in sight as we go on with these lessons?

Is it a good thing to get interested in heroes—"hero-worship," people call it? Why? Because we are pretty sure to grow like the kind of men we think most about. If we pick real heroes, *our* kind—what's that definition once more, all together?—then we need not be afraid of thinking too much about them.

A well-known man who died a few years ago at seventy-three years of age wrote, in the last year of his life, about two men that he had seen seventy years earlier. When he was about three years old he was lifted in his mother's arms to see President Andrew Jackson and Vice-President Martin Van Buren. This is what he wrote:—

"To this day nothing that my eyes have ever seen in the way of natural scenery equals in impressiveness the sight of a great man and a true one. . . . . I have seen the Alps and the Rocky Mountains, the Yosemite, Mount Sinai and the Mountains of Lebanon, Niagara Falls, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee, but these were as nothing in my memory compared with President Jackson, my first hero, and the other heroes who have followed him in my human gaze."

Next week we shall begin studying together out of the most remarkable "Hero Book" the world has

ever had. You know its name? Yes, the Bible. In a single year, recently, more than ten million copies of the Bible were sold or distributed. A pretty popular book, isn't it? We are going to give our whole attention to some of the heroes that the older part of the book tells about. Who can guess the name of the first man we are going to investigate? Who was the first hero in the Bible?

The lesson-studies that you have in your hands will show you just how to get ready to make next week's lesson even more interesting than to-day's was. There is something for you to do each day.

Once more, all together, on our answer to "What is a hero?" Do you notice that word "freeman" at the very beginning? What has that to do with bad habits that get a strong grip on a fellow, like—well, name some. A slave can't be a hero, can he?

II

A SAILOR WHO DARED TO TAKE RIDICULE

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

The first boat-builder and sailor that the Bible tells about was the grandson of the oldest man that ever lived. You will find his name, and his father's and grandfather's names, in Gen. 5: 25-32.

What was the name of Noah's father? Of his grandfather? What prophecy did Noah's father make about him when he named Noah? Name Noah's sons.

Second Day

Things went from bad to worse after Adam sinned and lost the Garden of Eden, until finally God decided on a new plan, and told just one man in all the earth about it. Read Gen. 6: 5-13.

Why was God grieved? What did he decide to do? What do you think "walked with God" meant? Why did Noah find favor with God?

Third Day

But God decides to save a few people, and he tells Noah who they are, and how it is to be done. Read Gen. 6: 14-22.

How was God going to destroy "all flesh"? What men and women were to be saved? What did Noah have to do about it? What is the best thing about Noah that you have discovered so far?

Fourth Day

The flood begins, but not until Noah and his family and possessions are safely inside the ark. Read Gen. 7: 6-16.

On what day of what month did the flood begin? In what two ways did the flood come? How long did it rain?

Fifth Day

The flood is at its height: does the ark prove to be a seaworthy boat? Read Gen. 7: 17 to 8: 5.

What proved that the water was very deep? What happened to those who were outside the ark? How long did the waters continue to increase? In what three ways did God make the waters grow less? What kind of land first appeared?

Sixth Day

Noah does all he can to learn about the land. Finally the great day arrives. Read Gen. 8: 6-20.

How many times did Noah send out birds? What brought him most hope? On what day of what month was the earth dry once more?

Seventh Day

Noah does not seem to forget God now that he is out of the ark, and God makes Noah some remarkable promises. Read Gen. 8: 20-22; 9: 8-19.

What was the first thing Noah did after he left the ark? What two promises did God make to Noah? What sign of his promise did God give which we still have?

Teaching the Lesson in Class*

Noah: Genesis 5: 25 to 9: 19

Who can tell us what the word ridicule means? Was any boy here ever ridiculed? Is it fun to be ridiculed? Pretty hard, eh? By the way, what is a hero? "Hard things that are worth while." But you hadn't thought of taking ridicule as the kind of hard thing that a hero does?

We have one hero-report to hear from before we answer this question. (Call for the report on John G. Paton that was assigned last week to one of the boys, and let the class decide, after hearing what Paton did, whether he was a hero or not.)

Now, for our sailor-hero—Bibles closed. Who was the oldest man that ever lived? His son's name? And *his* son's name? Let us remember them in that order: Methuselah, Lamech, Noah. Who remembers what is the first thing that we are told about Noah? It was what his father said about him when he was a baby; some one read Gen. 5: 29. "Noah" is from a word *nahem*, and it means "to

*As explained in "How to Teach These Lessons" (see pages vii to xiii), this teaching section of each lesson is intended to suggest an actual plan for conducting the lesson, but is not, of course, intended to be read to the class or memorized or followed verbatim. Colloquial language is used here, simply to suggest the manner of putting things to the class. A teacher can readily note the various steps or points suggested in this section, and then adapt it to his own use. The entire Bible passage given at the head of each lesson is to be studied by the teacher, but not necessarily all to be used in class. Every teacher should be sure to read carefully the teaching hints above referred to.

comfort." What does comfort mean? Strengthen. So "Noah" meant "strength-bringer." We will try to discover, a little later, whether his father's words came true.

Does God have favorites? Gen. 6:8 looks as though he did. Why was Noah a favorite with God? The next verse tells. "Noah walked with God,"—kept close to him. Well, if that's the way to become a favorite with God, anybody can be one. It looks as though being a favorite of God depended more on ourselves than on God, does it not?

But what do you think of a man who starts in to build a great house-boat, 525 feet long, and 87½ feet wide, and 52½ feet high, about the size of some ocean steamers,—big enough to hold lots of animals and birds and creeping things in addition to his own big family, in order to be ready for a flood of which no sign has yet appeared? No sign, at any rate, that his neighbors could see. What do you think his neighbors thought of him? What do you suppose they said about him, behind his back and to his face? Don't you suppose *ridicule* must have been the regular thing wherever Noah showed his face? And ridicule is hard medicine to take, I think you said a few minutes ago.

One of the questions in your home readings last week asked what was the best thing you had discovered in Noah? Who will answer that now? Do you want to know what *I* think? 6:22 is the answer. (Call on a boy to read it aloud.) Now, let us all say it together, twice.

Perhaps you're thinking that if God told you a flood was coming, and you were to build an ark to

be saved from it, you'd do it quickly enough; that there wasn't much credit to Noah in that. But how about that? *Do* we always do just what God tells us to do, even when we know that we shall get into trouble if we don't? Has anybody here ever disobeyed God? It is *easy* to disobey, isn't it? And it is often *hard* to obey. So let us give old Noah a good big credit mark for the fact that *"thus did Noah; according to* ALL *that God commanded him, so did he."* Perhaps that habit of his was another reason why he was a favorite with God.

You know how it all came out; let us have the story. (Call upon one after another to take up and carry on the story, asking that mistakes be sharply watched for and challenged by other members of the class.)

Now see what happened after the flood was over and Noah was safe on dry ground once more. Way back in Adam's day, because of Adam's sin, God did something to the ground, and told Adam about it. (Have Gen. 3:17 read.) But what did Lamech prophesy when a boy was born to him? (Gen. 5:29.) And now it seems as though God, as he sees Noah's loving burnt-offering, were contrasting this man Noah, who obeyed, with Adam who disobeyed; and God says, *I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.* No one knows just what the curse on the ground was, but it seems plain that it lasted only from Adam to Noah, and that it was taken away because of Noah's loyalty and obedience. So Noah was a comforter or "strength-bringer" to the whole world. And the rainbow is a pledge that there shall never be another flood.

Was it worth while to take ridicule for doing what God asked? What is a hero? Does Noah measure up to the hero standard?

Other Teaching Points

God takes good care of his favorites. He tries to take good care of all his children, but often they will not let him do what he wants to do for them. The more a person does for God, the better things God can do for him.

God told Noah what to do, but God did not do it for him. Noah not only had to build the great boat, but he had to gather the animals, and get an immense amount of food laid up for all. There is plenty of hard work in God's service,—but not nearly as hard as in the devil's service.

God was not unkind to those who were drowned. They were destroying themselves by sin, for sin always destroys. He simply hastened the destruction, instead of letting it drag on slowly.

God likes to test men's patience. Those in the ark were kept there one year and ten days (Gen. 7:11; 8:14).

Do we always remember to thank God for his goodness? It was the first thing Noah thought about after the flood was over.

III

AN UNSELFISH FIGHTER WHO TRUSTED

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

The first long journey in the Bible is recorded in Gen. 11: 31, 32. Find the two places there mentioned on the map, and decide with the help of the scale how many miles the journey was. The son, Abram, keeps up the journeying. Read Gen. 12: 1-9.

What promise did God make Abram? Who went with him? How far was it from Haran to Shechem? Trace the journey on the map.

Second Day

Abram kept right on traveling, even after he had reached the land to which God sent him. And he came near getting into trouble. See if you can decide why by reading Gen. 12: 10-20.

Why did Abram go to Egypt? What was he afraid might happen to him there? What do you think of the plan that Abram and Sarai decided on? What do you think of the way Pharaoh acted?

Third Day

Abram and his nephew Lot have to separate, and Abram decides on a novel plan. See what you think of it by reading Gen. 13: 1-13.

Why was it necessary for them to separate? Who took first choice? Why did Lot choose the Plain of the Jordan?

Fourth Day

Lot gets into trouble, when five kings commence fighting against four. Who do you suppose comes to the rescue? Read Gen. 14: 8-16.

Which set of kings first won, the five or the four? Who fought with Abram? Find on the map how far he pursued the kings.

Fifth Day

Abram rescued not only people, but riches, when he defeated the four kings. What did he do with the wealth? Read Gen. 14: 17-24.

What kings went to meet Abram after his victory? What reason do you think Abram had for not touching the rescued goods?

Sixth Day

Abram's name is changed to a name that means more. Read Gen. 17: 1-8.

Why was Abram's name changed? What did God promise him then? If you were going to be given a new name that would describe you, what kind of name would you like to have?

Seventh Day

Abraham prays for the city that he saved. Read Gen. 17: 1-5; 18: 20-33.

Why was God going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? What reason did Abraham give why God should save the cities? Why do you think Abraham stopped praying when he did?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Abraham: Genesis 11 : 27 to 21 : 8

How much money do you suppose an anchor is worth—not a "catboat" anchor, but the kind an ocean liner uses? And how much is the great chain cable worth that lets the anchor down until it grapples firm hold? (Let the boys guess at this, and then tell them: About $800 for an anchor, and about $4,000 for the cable.)

Well, then, what would you say of the captain of an ocean liner who deliberately cut the cable of his anchor after it had been let down, and steamed away, losing both anchor and cable in the ocean? Yes, I thought so. But I know of a captain who did just that. And before you make up your minds about him, let me tell you the story.

A few years ago a North German Lloyd steamship was anchored in the harbor of Gibraltar. The captain gave orders to get up the anchor. The little donkey engine puffed at its task, but went slower and slower, until finally the crank broke, and a hundred feet of chain shot out. The anchor was caught in the rocks. A gale was blowing, and a heavy sea running. The ship began to drift rapidly upon a fleet of British men-of-war. The captain rushed down from the bridge, and shouted instant orders to cut the anchor-chain. A mechanic with a huge cold chisel and sledge began to cut one of the mighty links. When only a thin strip of metal was left, the captain himself took the final responsibility, and with a small hatchet cut the last vestige of iron. The link

split open like torn cloth under the great strain, and they left the valuable anchor, chain and all, in the bottom of the harbor, and in a few hours had reached a sea where all was calm and peace.

It makes a difference what we cut loose the anchor *for,* doesn't it?—what we are going to gain by losing. And in the case of the ocean liner the whole vessel was saved by losing a very small fraction of her value. That was an easy choice to make, was it not?

Did Abraham have to do anything like cutting loose from a valuable anchor? Some one read the first verse of Gen. 12. He had a hard choice to make: on the one side his own homeland and family and friends; on the other, a desert journey into an unknown land, leaving behind everything in life that seems worth while.

But was there any good reason for going? What was it? (Gen. 12: 1, 2.) So God told him to go, and promised no end of good things if he would obey. Nothing hard about that, then, you say? Wait a minute; *isn't* it hard to obey God even when we know that he promises plenty of good things to those who obey him? There was a boy in New York City not a great while ago who had to make Abram's choice. His father was a saloon-keeper. One day he came to his Sunday-school superintendent and said:—

"Father says that I have got to serve the bar now on Sundays. What shall I do?"

"What do you think you ought to do?" asked the superintendent.

"I ought not to serve."

"Well," was the answer, "I have nothing to say to you."

The boy went on: "But father says if I don't serve the bar on Sundays I can pack and get out. What do you think I ought to do?"

"What do *you* think you ought to do?" came the question again.

"I ought to pack and get out," answered the boy.

"Very well," said the superintendent. "I have nothing to say to you excepting, when your father asks you to serve his bar, that you answer respectfully, and say: 'Father, I will do anything for you that is not contrary to the laws of God and man, but that is contrary to both.' "

The next Sunday the command came to serve the bar, and the boy answered as his friend had suggested. The father lost his temper and angrily said, "Then, march." And the boy put up all he had in a red handkerchief and marched out into the streets of New York, with no place to sleep and nothing to eat.*

It was Abram's choice over again, was it not? For God's call is simply the call to do right, and it is almost always hard.

(Take a moment to get a boy to show the route on the wall map, or on a smaller one, first from Ur to Haran, then from Haran to Shechem.)

How many of these Old Testament heroes were perfect men, never doing wrong or making a mistake? *Not a single one of them.* That ought to encourage us. They had to fight the same weakness in them-

*From Dr. A. F. Schauffler's "Pastoral Leadership of Sunday School Forces."

selves that we have to fight. Does any one know of a mistake, a real bit of cowardice, in Abram's life? (Let the Egypt incident—Gen. 12: 10-20—be discussed.)

When Abram and Lot got so rich that they had to separate, and go to different parts of the country, who took first choice? *No,* sir (if some one answers "Lot"); but I thought you'd say that. *Abram* took first choice. You don't believe it? Abram took first choice by choosing to give Lot his choice. Abram chose to give the other fellow first choice. And that's a pretty good kind of first choice to make, is n't it? Let's remember that: always take first choice, if you do it Abram's way.

Lot chose the best thing in sight, as it seemed to him; looked out for number one—and soon got into trouble. Who will tell the story of the first great battle in the Bible (Gen. 14: 1-16)?

And how did Abram give the king of Sodom a big surprise after the battle was over and Abram had won everything (14: 17-24)? Was that hard or easy to do, do you think? Abram was a fighter, but he fought for others, and would not take for himself anything that his victory had won. Let us make this a part of our heroism rule, then: when you must fight, fight hard, and fight to win; but never fight for what *you* are going to get out of it; fight only for some one else. The United States surprised the whole world a few years ago as Abram surprised the king of Sodom (tell how the United States' war with Spain was not for conquest and acquisition, but for the liberation of others, and how she kept her promise with Cuba though people thought she would not).

Abram—his name is changed now to Abraham, "father of a multitude"—knew how to pray. Many men who really do things in this world know how to pray, and never try anything hard without praying first. One of the best baseball pitchers Yale ever had is said to have prayed that he might pitch well before going into a game. (Call on one or two boys to tell of God's plan for Sodom and Gomorrah, and how Abraham prayed for the cities.) Will God do anything we pray to him for? No. He will do anything that is best for us, if we pray about it. So it is a good thing to know what not to pray for, as well as what to pray for; or to be willing to let God decide, if we are uncertain. Abraham knew when to *stop* praying. He stopped when he believed he had asked God for all that God ought to do. Therefore his prayer was successful: it brought him closer to God, Lot was saved, God's will in wiping out the terribly sinning cities was not blocked.

What is a hero? What hard-things-worth-while did Abraham do? But you don't know yet the hardest thing in his whole life,—that is coming next week.

Other Teaching Points

The first thing Abram did at his first two stopping-places was to remember God (Gen. 12:7, 8).

A half-truth may be a whole lie (Gen. 12:13; 20:12).

Give the distances from Ur to Haran (500 miles), and Haran to Shechem (350 miles), not only in miles, but by a comparison that will be familiar to the boys; e. g. Chicago to Buffalo, Philadelphia to Cleveland,

Detroit to St. Louis, Boston to Baltimore; and Boston to Philadelphia, Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, etc.

"Extensive excavations at Ur have never been undertaken, although Mr. Taylor dug into a few of the other mounds and obtained a glimpse of the life of the people of Abraham's time. He uncovered a house in a fairly perfect state of preservation. In such a house Abraham was born and lived as a boy. It was square, with mud walls, a single story high, and with a flat roof. The one room was dark, for the only light entered by the doorway. The floor was the hard ground, perhaps once covered by reed mats. The furniture was exceedingly simple, for then as now the people sat and slept upon the ground, and when they ate, they squatted about a common tray. A few jars for water, a hollow stone for pounding the grain, a few bronze implements and mats were the only furnishings."*

Abram not only started out to do hard things at God's call; he kept it up all his life. It has been well said: "The prizes are not to the starters; they are to the arrivers. But there is no arriving without starting."

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*Edgar James Banks, in "The Sunday School Times" of January 26, 1907.

IV

THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT FIGHT

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

A boy gets his first training in self-control in a life-and-death scene with his father. Read Gen. 22: 1-8.

Why did God ask Abraham to do this (ver. 1)? Do you think Isaac knew what God's plan was? Do you think Abraham knew?

Second Day

Abraham meets the hardest test of his whole life, and is glad that he did. Read Gen. 22: 9-13.

Do you think, now, that Abraham knew all the time what God had in store for him? What blessing did God promise Abraham?

Third Day

A famine makes Isaac think of taking a trip to Egypt as his father had done years before. But God stops him. Read Gen. 26: 1-5.

Find on the map Gerar and Philistia. Why do you think God forbade Isaac's going down to Egypt? Find a promise God made to Abraham like this promise to Isaac.

Fourth Day

God seems to be keeping his promise, and Isaac's crops and herds multiply. Read Gen. 26: 12-17.

Why did the Philistines envy Isaac? What did they do for spite? What did Isaac do about it?

Fifth Day

When a man attends to his own business and works hard, people say he "says nothing and saws wood." Isaac says nothing and digs wells. Read Gen. 26: 18-22.

What did Isaac do about the wells of his father which the Philistines had stopped up? How many times did they steal his wells?

Sixth Day

Sometimes God approves fighting, and sometimes he does not. Did he seem to approve what Isaac had done? Read Gen. 26: 23-25.

What earlier promise of God's to Isaac was like this? Find Beersheba on the map.

Seventh Day

What do you suppose the Philistines thought of Isaac for the way he had been taking their unfair attacks? Read Gen. 26: 26-33.

Why did Abimelech want to make this bargain with Isaac? What do you think of Isaac for making it?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Isaac: Genesis 22 to 26

Men who are digging with pick and spade in Palestine and Egypt and Mesopotamia, the lands of the Bible, to see what they can discover of the life of old days, have turned up wonderful things. A few years ago a young Englishman started digging in the land of Canaan, where Abraham lived, and one of the most striking things he found was—what do you suppose? By the altars and high places where the old Canaanites worshiped their heathen gods, were the bones of babies and little children. And what did that mean? It meant that the Canaanites used to sacrifice children to their gods, kill them on the altars of the gods, just as in India mothers have thrown live babies into the sacred river Ganges, thinking to please their gods in this way.

Abraham, who worshiped our God, the only true God, undoubtedly saw such sacrifices going on among the Canaanite people in whose land he lived. One day God said to him, as it were, "Abraham, would you be willing to do as much for me as these neighbors of yours are doing for their false gods?" That seems to have been the reason why Abraham was put to what seems like such a cruel test. It was a practice that Abraham was perfectly familiar with, and it did not seem to him as horrible and unnatural as it would to us to-day.

Abraham had made a habit of obedience by this time, and he met this hardest test of all in the way he had met other tests. But it must have been

awfully hard for him. God's promises depended on the life of this only son; and God now asks that he be offered up!

What a soldier-training for that boy! He must have known that something very unusual was ahead, as he set out with his father to the mountain. But he evidently knew nothing of God's plan, as he asked his father about the sacrifice; yet he caught his father's spirit of soldier-like obedience, self-control, and trust in the Commander. And there is no record of any struggle or rebellion on the boy's part as the time came for him to be bound and laid on the altar. Wouldn't *you* like to have yourself and your nerves under such control as that? Every one of you can, if you make that habit of obedience *your* habit.

How glad both Abraham and Isaac must have been that they obeyed, after it was all over, and the ram had been offered up, and father and son were not separated after all! How sorry and ashamed they would have felt if they had rebelled and then had learned that God never intended that Isaac should be killed, but only that he should be offered, as he was! For even Abraham did not know beforehand what God's plan was; if he had known, it would have been no test.

No man can be a real hero unless he is ready to forget himself and give up anything, everything, at God's call,—that is, in order to do right. Now let us see whether this early training in self-control and self-forgetfulness and heroism affected the man that the boy Isaac grew to be.

Isaac has grown up and married and is living—

where? Some one show us on the map (Gerar in Philistia). He is getting very rich,—God likes to trust riches to those who trust and obey him. Some folks have the idea that piety and poverty must go together. There is nothing of that sort in the Bible, but just the opposite (have a boy read Mark 10:29, 30). Now let two of you (naming two boys) tell us what happened to Isaac after the Philistines began to envy him (Gen. 26:15-22).

It looks as though Isaac just wore out his enemies by refusing to fight. Honestly, what do you think of him? Coward? Soft? No sand? Did it take "sand" to go through without a murmur what he did that day in the mountains, as he looked up at the sharp edge of the shining knife in his father's hands? Does God promise to bless cowards? Yet God made a special promise to Isaac after he had refused to fight for his rights. Do men usually come to a "soft" man, a coward, and ask him to enter into an agreement not to harm them? But that is what the king of Philistia did as he and his captain came and begged Isaac to be good to them.

No, boys; whatever was Isaac's reason for not smashing those Philistines who filled up his father's wells and ran his herdsmen out of their own, you can't honestly say it was cowardice. It looks as though Isaac was simply refusing to fight for his own selfish interests,—and it takes a mighty brave man to do that. There is nothing in the whole world so hard as to let other people unfairly take your "rights" away from you; and yet often there is nothing in the world that pays a fellow so well as to do just that. Abram, his father, had fought, but

to protect other people, you remember, not himself; just as the right kind of chap will take no end of cheap abuse and bluff from a bully without soiling his hands to pay it back, yet who will thrash that same bully soundly the moment he starts in to make life miserable for a little fellow who can't defend himself.

You remember the fighting part of our heroism rule of last week? "When you must fight, fight hard, and fight to win; but *never fight for what you are going to get out of it; fight only for some one else.*" Sometimes a boy's hardest fight will be the fight with himself to keep from fighting. But such fighting makes a freeman-hero. A hero whose case we are going to study later said:—

> "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
> And he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Did Isaac do anything hard in his lifetime? Was it worth while? Does he measure up to the hero test?

V

A CRIPPLED HERO WHO SURRENDERED

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

What do you think of a boy who "drives a sharp bargain," and gets the best of the other fellow every time? Do heroes do that? Read Gen. 25: 27-34.

In what was Esau skillful? Do you admire Esau for what he did here? Give your reasons. Do you admire Jacob for what he did here? Why?

Second Day

Jacob and his mother seem to be afraid that that sharp bargain with Esau did not clinch the matter, for they plan a scheme to beat him again. Read Gen. 27: 1-17.

Which was the older of the two sons? How was Jacob's mother going to imitate the venison (deer meat)? What was Jacob afraid of? How was Jacob made to seem like Esau? Was this plan better or worse than Jacob's pottage bargain with Esau?

Third Day

When a man who has learned to drive sharp bargains needs to lie to help himself out, do you think he will hesitate to do so? Jacob got into a corner here. Read Gen. 27: 18-29.

Count the lies Jacob told; how many were there? Which was the worst one? Do you think that a "blessing" gotten that way would help a person?

Fourth Day

The thing was only half done until Esau got back with his venison: now see what happened. Read Gen. 27: 30-41.

Which son had Isaac wanted to bless most? Why? What did Esau want to do to Jacob?

Fifth Day

It is time for Jacob to run for his life, and his mother and he know it. But they do not know what is going to happen to him on his journey. Read Gen. 27: 42-45; 28: 10-22.

How long did Jacob's mother expect him to be gone? Find Beersheba and Haran on the map, and draw the journey. What was God's promise, in your own words?

Sixth Day

Almost forty years have passed; Jacob has a family of his own, and is on his way back to his old home. But he still fears Esau. Read Gen. 32: 3-11; 22-31.

What was Jacob's plan for saving at least some of his party from Esau? What do you thing of Jacob's prayer? What was the best thing in it? Why did God cripple Jacob?

Seventh Day

The two brothers come face to face after almost forty years. Who wins now? Read Gen. 33: 1-11.

What did Esau do when he met Jacob? Why do you think Esau so freely forgave Jacob?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Jacob: Genesis 25: 19-34; 27: 1 to 33: 20; 47: 8, 9

Perhaps you've been wondering, as you read your Bible this last week, who the hero was; and, if it was Jacob, where the heroism came in. One thing is sure: there was plenty in Jacob that was not hero stuff, and there were things he did that a hero would be ashamed of. What were they? (Call out from the boys the facts of the pottage and venison incidents.)

Now I want to tell you something that was not in the Bible readings you had. When Esau and Jacob were born, God had told Rebekah, their mother, that the younger, Jacob, should be the leader and the stronger of the two. He had made it plain that the promises to Abraham and Isaac, about a great people, were to be carried out through Jacob, not through Esau. Rebekah had God's word for this. Jacob undoubtedly knew it through his mother. *Now* what do you think of the sharp bargain and the lies?

The birthright and the blessing had been promised to Jacob by God from the very start. But Jacob and Rebekah seemed to think that God could not be trusted to carry out his plans himself, so they tried to help him out with a little sharp practice, and some lies. Perhaps they called them "white" lies, or "justifiable." When *is* a lie justifiable? Never, while earth or heaven stands. God is a God of

truth.* The devil is the father of lies.† God could not lie and be God. When we think that a time has come when a lie is necessary for some good end, we say, in effect, "God is now powerless to help me; I will leave him and turn to the devil, the father of lies, for help." (No bigger lesson can be lodged in the hearts and minds of your boys than this of the eternal enmity between God and the lie. Few people, even among Christians, fully understand the difference. To become full of the subject, read H. Clay Trumbull's little volume, "A Lie Never Justifiable.")

No real blessing was ever won by a sharp bargain or by lying. Jacob got no blessing from these things. He was a brainy fellow, a keen, shrewd, able man; but none of the hero has appeared yet. What he has done so far has been to sow misery for himself and for others. His mother thought it would be all right if he went away for a few days. He went,—and she never saw her boy again in this world. How long was it before he came back? (Almost forty years.)

To what kind of people is God most ready to send special help, good people or bad people? (You are likely to get the answer, "Good people"; if you do, startle the class a little by promptly disagreeing with that answer.) No, sir; God is just as ready to help bad folks as good. In fact, the more a person needs God's help, the more eager to help him God seems to be.

Jacob was pretty well down now, wasn't he? An exile from home, his brother ready to kill him, on a long, dangerous journey into an unknown land, and

*Psalms 31: 5, 146: 6.
†John 8: 44.

knowing all the time that he had been doing wrong—a terrible wrong. Could any fellow feel much worse than he must have felt that night as he lay down to sleep, all alone? What did he see before the night was over? And what did he hear (Gen. 28: 10-15)? God, without a word of reproach, just lovingly promised to stand by him and to fulfill the promise made to his father and grandfather. That's a way God has. He was trying to bring Jacob to himself by reminding him of the big responsibilities that lay ahead for him.

It made a deep impression on the homesick man, but that was about all. For the next forty years he kept up his tricks and deceptions and sharp practices, until one night he was *crippled into new life.* It was that night when he was so afraid of the meeting with Esau next day,—that night when the greatest wrestling match in history happened.

But before we look into that let me tell you about a Connecticut boy who went into the Northern army in the Civil War, and who was made a lieutenant. (The true incident is as follows; the better way is to memorize the facts and tell the story in your own words, rather than to read it) :—

When first I joined my regiment in North Carolina, I found there a young lieutenant, whom I had known as an active, earnest Christian worker in his Connecticut home. As I was looking up the members of my new charge, I called on him in his tent, and said something of my hope to have his help in work for my Master.

"No, no, Chaplain," said he, "I've given up all that stuff. I know now that there's no truth in it, and I don't want to hear a word on the subject."

"You are not saying now what you believe, Lieutenant."

"What do you mean, Chaplain?"

"I mean that I know you well enough to understand that

what you said and did, for years, in your faithful Christian work and in your Sunday-school teaching, has not been given up by you out of your inmost heart. You can talk this way to me now, to try to stiffen up your courage of resistance; but when the camp is quiet, and you are alone on your bunk in the darkness, you would never talk in this way to your God, who you know is near you always."

"Well," he said, somewhat more gently, "I don't want to talk about this subject, at any rate."

"But I must talk about it," I said. "It's very real to me. And I'm here because of my belief. I love you too dearly to refrain from speaking to you, and urging you to come back to your old love and faith and duty and joy." . . . .

After a little there came on a battle in which our regiment lost severely. Several temporary hospitals were opened in small dwelling-houses in different parts of the field of action. As I was occupied in one of these hospitals, I heard that my lieutenant friend lay wounded in another. As soon as I had opportunity, I went over to see him. His right leg had been amputated near the hip. He lay on a cot among many wounded. Looking up as I approached, he said cheerily:

"The Lord has got me, Chaplain. I wouldn't serve Him with two legs, so He took away one. But now I'll be more of a man with one leg than I was with two."

Then as I spoke warmly of my sympathy with and interest in him, he told of his experience and feelings.

"As my leg went out from under me, and I felt I was gone, I said, 'The Lord's got me, and I'm glad of it.' You were right, Chaplain, that day you came to my tent first, I never really gave up my belief, or had any rest in my life trying to live without faith. And now I believe I shall live nearer the Lord than ever, and have more comfort in him."

He was confident that he should soon be restored to health, and that he should use his new strength in the Lord's service. I had pleasant interviews with him as he talked of his plans in Christ's service, and he gave convincing evidence of his Christian love and faith. But the shock of the amputation was severer than he at first supposed, and he soon sank away to his final rest. The prodigal had returned to his loving Father's home.*

*From "Individual Work for Individuals," by H. Clay Trumbull.

Jacob, like that lieutenant, had been fighting God. That was the trouble with him—it is the trouble with some of the rest of us. But God had big plans for Jacob, if Jacob would only stop fighting him, and work *with* him. So God decided to bring the fight to a finish that night, if he could—for it depended upon Jacob more than upon God—the fight that Jacob had been waging against God all his lifetime. And he put the fight in a way that Jacob could understand, a wrestling match; for you know there is nothing in the world that has so many tricks in it, and chances for deception and fouls and dirty work, as wrestling. Jacob ought to be good at it!

He was. But after he had wrestled all night Jacob had not gained any advantage; and then, just as if to show him how useless it was to fight God, the Wrestler touches—just lays his finger on—Jacob's thigh, and the muscle is strained. It was God's way of bringing Jacob to his senses, so that he might decide how he would treat God for the rest of his life. And now Jacob does something hard,—and worth while. He *holds on* to the One who had crippled him. He does not let him go, as he might have done. You can almost hear him say, with the young lieutenant: "The Lord's got me, and I'm glad of it. I'll be more of a man with one leg than I was with two."

When a man stops fighting God, and holds on to God, even though God has had to hurt him for his own good, then God can bless him in the way he wants to. God blessed Jacob quickly now. He changed his name from "Supplanter" to "God's cap-

tain." And you remember what a beautiful surprise was ahead for Jacob the next day (Gen. 33: 1-11).

By his tricks and lies Jacob had delayed for many weary years the blessing that God intended for him. He got the blessing and birthright finally, not because he had taken advantage of Esau and deceived his father, but after he had repented of all that and had put Esau into first place (Gen. 32: 4, 5). He finally did a hard thing that was worth while, and he gave up his fight against God; but he had to be crippled to do it.

Boys, don't make God cripple you to save you. It is better to be crippled into heroic life, as Jacob was, than to live and die God's enemy; but it is better still to start life on God's side, never fighting him, and never making it necessary for him to bring you down in a heap.

VI

A BOY WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE IN LUCK

Home Work for the Pupils

First Day

To learn how a fancy coat and curious dreams made a boy disliked, read Gen. 37: 1-11.

What two names had Joseph's father? How old was Joseph at this time? Mention several reasons why you think Joseph's brothers hated him.

Second Day

Joseph is sent on an errand, and goes farther than he expected to. Read Gen. 37: 12-28.

Find Shechem on the map, and Dothan. Why did the brothers, do you think, want to get rid of Joseph? What was their first plan? Their second plan? Their final plan?

Third Day

Joseph gets a pretty good start in Egypt, but it doesn't seem to last long. Read Gen. 39: 1-6, 19-23.

What official of Pharaoh's bought Joseph? Why was Joseph promoted so fast? Why was Joseph put into prison? How did he get on in prison?

Fourth Day

Some other people than Joseph get into trouble, and dream dreams as he used to. Read Gen. 40: 1-23.

Who were the two men thrown into prison with Joseph? Describe the two dreams. What did Joseph say the two dreams meant?

Fifth Day

And now a bigger man than any of them has dreams, and somebody remembers Joseph. Read Gen. 41 : 1-16.

Describe the dreams of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Who told Pharaoh about Joseph? To whom did Joseph give credit for his power to interpret dreams?

Sixth Day

Joseph tries his hand at interpreting a king's dreams, and something unexpected happens. Read Gen. 41 : 25-43.

What did Joseph say the king's dreams meant? What did Joseph advise the king to do? What position did the king give Joseph?

Seventh Day

What about Joseph's old enemies, his brothers, all these years? There is a strange time ahead for them. Read Gen. 42 : 1-8; 45 : 1-5, 9-11.

What drove Joseph's brothers down into Egypt? How did he treat them at first? What did he say to them later? What did he do for his whole family?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Joseph: Genesis 37 to 50

What is "luck"? Was any fellow here ever lucky? Tell us about it. Was any fellow here ever unlucky? Well, tell us about that.

You know that young Hebrew shepherd boy Joseph pretty well now,—you 've been living with him all the week. Was he lucky, or unlucky? Both, you say? Tell me first how he was lucky? Yes; he was his father's favorite, to begin with; he had specially fine clothes to wear; his very dreams foretold his good luck. Later a master in Egypt pushed him right to the front, and finally he had a position next to the king. Folks who believe in luck would say Joseph had more than his share of it, would n't they? And lots of people say that if a man is only "born lucky," nothing can stop him from winning.

Those same people say that if a fellow has luck against him, he can't win, no matter how hard he tries. I wonder what they would say of Joseph's prospects if you told them only the unlucky side of his story. What was it? He had a good start,—better than the average, but he couldn't win with luck against him. Even after his hard luck had begun, with the pit episode, he would have escaped from that pit if he had had any kind of luck, but as chance would have it, along came the Ishmaelites just then and gave him another set-back. And then, with things seemingly in his favor for a while with Potiphar down in Egypt, out crops his hard luck

again in the unjust imprisonment. What's the use of trying, with luck dead against you like that?

* * * * *

Let the boys have both sides of the case, in some such way, and ask them squarely if it would not be possible to make Joseph a pretty good argument for either good luck or bad luck, if one is thinking mostly about luck. Just there lies the whole trouble. To the one who gives luck *any* place in life as a real factor, *everything* is luck, and everything can be explained by luck. Of course, most of the purpose and zest in life is destroyed for such a one: the most that he can do is to hope for luck, or grumble at his hard luck. Here is one of the strongest arguments against cards and betting. They tend to give chance too much emphasis for healthy living.

Now ask the boys to sweep the whole absurd and cowardly talk about luck aside and study Joseph's case intelligently. For *he* was a fellow who didn't believe in luck for a minute. If he had, he might never have gotten out of Potiphar's prison. He would only have spent his time there grumbling about his hard luck, instead of forgetting himself and seeing what he could do for other folks.

After Joseph had been sold to Captain Potiphar, of the King's Guard, we are told that he was "prosperous," and why. What was the reason (Gen. 39:2)? "Jehovah was with Joseph." But *anybody* could be prosperous if God was with him, you say? Well, why was God with him,—was it just God's favoritism? No; I believe God was with Joseph because Joseph was with God. Won't God be with

any one who does as Joseph did? God *does* have favorites, but they are those who make God their favorite. So any one can have God with him.

Do you think an Egyptian captain would promote a Hebrew boy so fast simply because he saw that the boy was true to God? No; there must have been another reason. And that? What's the reason for getting promoted anywhere. Joseph *deserved* it. He made good. He wasn't afraid of hard work, and he did it well,—a little better than anybody else. So he went to the top. And he snapped his fingers at luck.

Until he found himself in prison! But I believe he did so even there. Now I want you to tell me, step by step, how Joseph got to the top again, in prison and out again, and then we will decide how much place luck had in his life.

Draw out from the boys the fact that it was the same ability in prison that made such a good impression on his keeper: Joseph's thoughtful interest in others that led to interpreting the prison-dreams; the tardily remembered service to the chief butler that led to the opportunity to serve Pharaoh; and Joseph's complete trust in God that made him successful in his interpreting Pharaoh's dreams. Pharaoh's promoting was for the same reason as Potiphar's; both saw not only that this young fellow was to be trusted, but also that he could *do* things.

His brothers had no right to expect to be forgiven. That is why it was Joseph's great chance. It is when the other fellow is wrong and we are right, that we have our biggest opportunity to forgive. True for-

giveness is *unreasonable,*—that is the way God forgives us, and likes to have us forgive others.

Joseph did not believe in luck,—that is why he got somewhere. No man who believes in luck gets anywhere to stay—except down. Did Joseph do anything hard that was worth while? Was it hard to be cheerful and willing and a tireless worker in captivity,—as Potiphar's slave? And in prison? Was it hard to give God the credit for the dream-interpretation, when he might have claimed it all himself? Was it hard, perhaps, even to be nice to his brothers who had sold him? He did a good many things that were hard and worth while. Then he must have been a ———?

Other Teaching Points

Joseph was a freeman even while he was a slave and in prison. Why? And there are some fellows who are not in prison who are nevertheless not free.

It was not *necessary* for Joseph's brothers to sin in order to get Joseph into Egypt. God could have taken him there in some other way.

The life of each boy in the class is planned by God just as carefully as Joseph's was. But we can spoil God's plans if we will.

Dr. Babcock's verse in "School Days" is worth learning:

"Lord, let me make this rule,
To think of life as school,
And try my best
To stand each test
And do my work,
And nothing shirk."

VII

A MAN WHO DARED THE IMPOSSIBLE

Home Work for the Pupils

First Day

Joseph is dead, and his brothers' families have grown into a great multitude of people in Egypt. There are hard times ahead for them. Read Ex. 1: 8-14; 2: 1-10.

Why did the new king fear the children of Israel? How did he try to crush them? Describe the baby Moses' start in life. Was it a good one? Why?

Second Day

Moses has been having a good time while his people are having a hard time. He cannot endure it very long and one day he acts. Read Ex. 2: 11-15, 23-25.

Why did Moses kill the Egyptian? Was it murder? Give your reasons. Find Midian on your map.

Third Day

Perhaps Moses thought his chance to help his people in Egypt was ended the day he fled for his life. Read Ex. 3: 1-12.

How did God get Moses' attention? What did God say he had seen? What did God promise? What did God ask Moses to do?

Fourth Day

It took a long, discouraging time to get Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave his land. He finally agreed to do so, after God had sent terrible plagues upon the Egyptians. Moses is the leader, and the Israelites are just starting to leave, when they seem to be caught in a trap. Read Ex. 14: 1-12.

Why do you think Pharaoh changed his mind about letting the people go? Had the people a right to be so discouraged? Why?

Fifth Day

It doesn't seem to trouble Moses much; he decides to trust God to bring his people out of the trap. Read Ex. 14: 13, 14, 21-31.

Upon whom does Moses put the responsibility for the rescue? What miracle did God work? Describe what happened to the Israelites and to the Egyptians.

Sixth Day

God calls Moses up into a mountain to give him the greatest laws the world has ever known. Read Ex. 19: 1-6; 20: 1-17.

Find Mount Sinai on the map. Learn the Ten Commandments by heart.

Seventh Day

For forty years Moses and the children of Israel have lived in the wilderness; Moses and God have brought them through the "impossible" over and over again. Now it is Moses' time to die. Read Deut. 34: 1-7.

Find the land of Moab on the map. What do you think was the most remarkable thing about Moses?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Moses: Exodus 1 to 14, 19, 20; Deuteronomy 34

Did you ever see a baseball or a football team that played a great game while it was winning, but that went all to pieces if things began to go against it? And did you ever see a team of just the other kind,—the kind that puts up its stiffest fight when it has an uphill game to play? Which kind do you like best?

Did it strike you that Moses was an up-hill kind of man, as you read about him last week? Well, he was; when everything was going against him, he had a way of pulling things together and winning. But he wasn't always that way. Let us take a look at him again.

He had "iron in his blood," to begin with, for his people, before he was born were having pretty severe training in Egypt. Some one tell us about that. (Call out the facts of Pharaoh's oppression, and tell of his edict to kill the male children.)

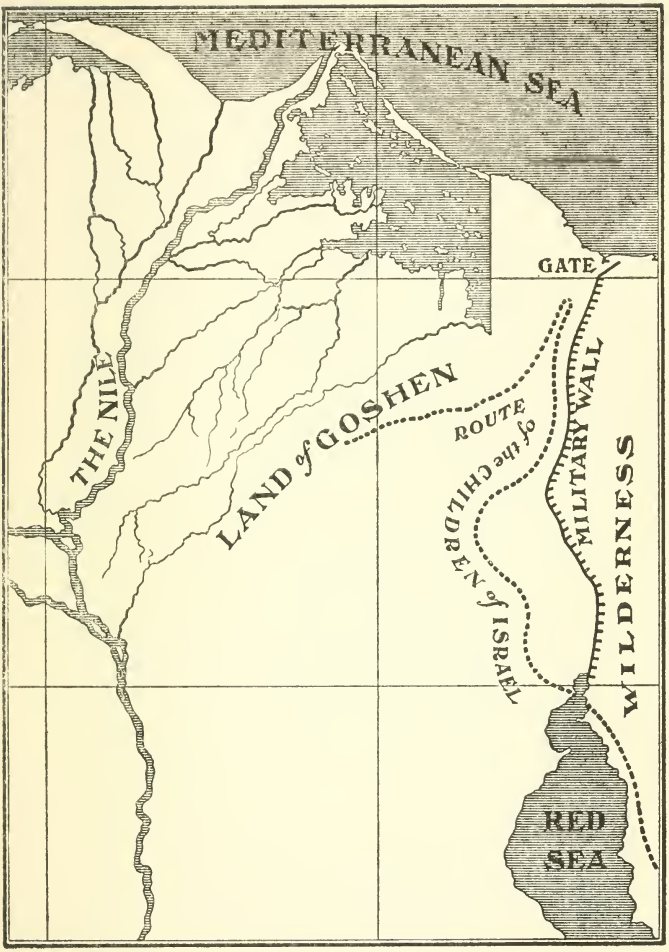
But what do you think of the life he floated into in that little bulrush-basket of his? Hard, or easy, to be adopted by a king's daughter? Probably he grew up used to having his own way, without much training in uphill work. His first real excitement was that day when he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. What do you think of what Moses did then? (Show that while his *spirit* was commendable, his method was wrong. By exercising self-control Moses might have retained his influence with

the king and perhaps almost have duplicated Joseph's position, eventually bringing about a peaceful release of his people.)

It looked as though he had lost his chance, forever, to be a deliverer of his people. Not much sand left in the man who ran for his life to the desert, was there? But there he had a long time to think it over; and it was a very different Moses who, forty years later, was ready to let God tell him of new plans for Israel's release. It was a Moses who had very little confidence left in himself,—a good, healthy condition for any fellow to be in. For when we have finally lost all confidence in ourselves, then we are readier to begin to put our confidence where it belongs—in God.

Were you ever squarely up against the impossible? Moses and the children of Israel were, that night when they were trying to march out of Egypt. Let me show you how they were trapped. (Sketch the map shown on the opposite page, on the blackboard or a tablet of paper.)

They expected to take the usual way out of Egypt by the north, where the dotted line is, and then to pass through a gate in this great military wall that protected Egypt from enemies on the east and north. But when they had almost reached the gate, God told them to turn and go south, inside the wall, which they did. And finally, when they had come way down to the head of the Red Sea, they learned that Pharaoh and his army were after them! Just see the trap: Egypt on the west, the Red Sea on the south, the great wall joining the Red Sea on



The Red Sea Trap

the east, and the enemy on the north, bearing down on them!

Is it any wonder the people were scared? But here is where Moses fights his great up-hill fight,—and puts his trust where it belongs. They had gotten where they were *by obeying God's orders;* therefore they could depend upon God to get them out. What did Moses say to the frightened people (Gen. 14: 14)? Was he right? What happened? (Get the boys to tell the story of the Red Sea crossing.)

That was only one time when this plucky up-hill fighter dared the impossible, and won. You will read the whole story some day, I hope. Because Moses knew how to take orders from God, he knew how to give orders. He was the greatest lawmaker in history, for he had his laws right from God. Shall we say them all together (the Ten Commandments)?

Does God ever ask us to do the impossible today? Yes, he does. He often asks us to do what *looks* utterly impossible, and what no boy or man could do without God's help. That is the time he wants us to pull ourselves together, trust him, and *do* the thing.

Now, who will tell us whether Moses was a hero, and why?

VIII

THE GENERAL WHO CAPTURED THE PROMISED LAND

Home Work for the Pupils

First Day

How would you have liked to step into Moses' place, after he was dead, and take command of that crowd of Israelites? A pretty big job. But a younger man named Joshua had been in training for it. Notice Joshua's training before Moses died. Read Ex. 17:8-13; 24:12, 13; Deut. 31:7, 8.

What shows Moses' confidence in Joshua as a fighter? What weapon did Joshua use? What shows that Moses did not want Joshua to be only a fighter?

Second Day

After Moses' death, Joshua received his commission, as general of the armies of Israel, from God himself. Read Josh. 1:1-9.

What did God now tell Joshua to do? What did God promise Joshua?

Third Day

Joshua loses no time in getting ready for the big undertaking of leading the people into the Promised Land. There is a deep river between. How can it be crossed? Read Josh. 1:10, 11; 3:7-17.

What was the first thing that Joshua told the peo-

ple to do? Who were to lead the Israelites into the Jordan? What miracle did God work for the people?

Fourth Day

It was one thing to get into the land of Canaan (the Promised Land) and another thing to capture it. They had to begin with one strong city, Jericho. Read Josh. 6: 1-5, 8-11, 15, 16, 20, 21.

What showed that Jericho was afraid of the Israelites? Describe the way in which Joshua and his people captured the city. Why, do you think, did they destroy the city so completely?

Fifth Day

After Joshua had won another great victory, he gathered his people together—for what purpose? Read Josh. 8: 30-35.

In what mountain did Joshua build an altar? Find it on the map. What book did he read to them?

Sixth Day

Five kings decide to attack a city, Gibeon, and Joshua tries his hand against the five. To see what followed read Josh. 10: 3-14.

How did God help Joshua to begin the fight? Then what miracle did Joshua ask to have done?

Seventh Day

When it comes Joshua's time to die, he has a last message to give to his people. You will find it in Josh. 23: 1-6, 10, 11, 14; 24: 20-24.

Who did Joshua say had fought for the people? What did Joshua urge the people to do? Tell the secret of Joshua's success as a soldier.

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Joshua: **Exodus 17: 8-14; 24: 12, 13; Deuteronomy 31: 7, 8;** Joshua 1 to 4, 6 to 8, 10, 23, 24

Some people say that religion is a good thing for women and girls,—but not for men or boys. What do you think of that opinion? Is there truth in it? (Let the boys discuss this, for a few minutes.)

Whatever one may think about the religion of today, what shall we say of religion in Old Testament times? Was it a women's and girls' affair then,—something for "mollycoddles" among men,—or an important part of the life of fighters and leaders? (There is but one answer to this,—let the boys prove it by illustrations from memory.)

And now we have been getting acquainted with a man who had a hard thing to do—one of the hardest places to fill that all history tells about. He had to take up the work of the greatest man in Israel's history before Christ; and not only that, but he had to do so at the time of one of the greatest crises in Israel's national life.

As an encouragement to face this staggering situation, God wanted Joshua to think about seven great facts, or

Seven Secrets of Success

Let us discover, if we can, what they were.

Did the death of Moses, who had saved the Israelites out of Pharaoh's hand and led them safely for forty years through the wilderness, make it easier, or harder, to commence the attack on the strong-

holds of Canaan? Yet, "Moses is dead, *therefore* take Canaan." God's first word to Joshua was, not "because it is easy, do it," but "because it is hard, do it." The boy who goes for a thing *because* it is hard will succeed when the boy who picks the easy things is sure to fail.

(The seven "secrets of success," to be drawn out from the class by the teacher in some such way as that of the preceding paragraph, are the following):

1. *Because* it is hard, do it! (Josh. 1:2.)
2. I (Jehovah) am in charge ("which *I* do give to them"—ver. 2).
3. You must win for yourself whatever you would have (ver. 3).
4. A world-empire is my plan for you (ver. 4).
5. Nobody can defeat you while you and I work together,—and *I* will never desert you (ver. 5).
6. Be strong and courageous (ver. 6).
7. Learn the law by heart, by living with it and in it, day and night; and *keep* the law, every bit.

Just suppose you and I wrote down those seven secrets of success, and looked at them every morning, lived by them every day; do you think we should succeed? Let's try it, anyway; here they are if you want them (hand to each boy a previously prepared slip of paper containing the seven points).

Did Joshua live by them? Well, let us prove it by his life. What was the first thing ahead of him? To get an army across a river, without boats or bridges, and while the river was swollen high above its banks (Josh. 3:15)! Pretty hard? Yes; that was a good reason for doing it. What is our first secret of success?

"Nothing but Omnipotence can stand in the way of a determined man," said an old Yankee railroad president. And when you have the determined man hitched to Omnipotence, what chance then is there of a failure? No ordinary or extraordinary rivers, seas, or mountains lying across the path of such a one will be anything but invitations to him to push ahead without swerving.

Joshua seems to have been that kind of man, who worked with Omnipotence. And he carried others along with the irresistible swing of his enthusiastic confidence that nothing could stop him—in that partnership. Such men always do carry others with them. Yet Joshua had as overwhelming, discouraging difficulties to face as any man that ever drew breath: Moses' death at the critical time; a strange land to enter; trained and bloodthirsty tribes of fighting men to contest every inch of the ground; the enemy having every advantage, being garrisoned in their own territory; and a swollen river dead ahead, lying between Israel and the enemy.

But God had promised to drive out their enemies from before them; and as a pledge of this, he would get them safely across this turbulent Jordan *if they would push straight ahead into the water first.* And that is just what God promises us to-day. He will see us through every difficulty that blocks the way into which He calls us, if we drive straight into those difficulties without waiting for their removal.

Did you ever hear of the self-opening gate that is said to be used sometimes on country roads? It stands fast and firm across the road as the traveler approaches it. If he stops before he gets to it, it

will not open. But if he will drive right at it, his wagon-wheels press the springs below the roadway, and the gate swings back to let him through. He must push right on, however, at the closed gate, or it will stay closed. See the point?

Because Joshua took God at his word, and the priests and people took Joshua at his word, "it came to pass" just as God had promised, and the barrier utterly failed to block the way of the people who followed God's leading. Here is a motto to remember: *"When we are sure of God's leading, nothing can defeat us."*

What was the next thing to do, after getting across the Jordan? Harder still: capture a walled city! But you know how it was done,—tell me how.

Do you notice that in crossing the Jordan, and in capturing Jericho, and later in fighting the five kings, God did not do it all,—he only helped? Joshua and the people had plenty to do. That is always the way. We must do *our* best for God, if we want God to do *his* best for us.

What was the seventh "secret of success"? Did Joshua do it? Did he help the people to do it? How? (Josh. 8:34, 35.) And what did he tell them just before he died? (Get different boys to read aloud the following verses: Josh. 23:6; 24:24.)

What is a hero? Who is in any doubt whether Joshua was a hero? What were some of the hard-and-worth-while things that he did?

IX

THE CONQUEROR WHO WOULD NOT BE KING

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

Do you think the Israelites always followed Joshua's advice, and did right in the sight of God? Read of the trouble they got into, in Judges 6: 1-10.

What was the name of the enemy that conquered Israel? How long was Israel in Midian's power? In what places did the Israelites live, for fear of the Midianites?

Second Day

God picks out a young Israelite to deliver his people from Midian. Read Judges 6: 11-16.

What was the name of the young man who was to whip Midian? What was he doing when God came to him? What encouragement did God give him?

Third Day

The first thing God tells Gideon to do is harder than fighting the enemy, for it means making enemies of his own family and friends. Read Judges 6: 25-32.

Why did God want the altar of Baal thrown down? Why did Gideon do it by night? What did the men of the city say about this? What sensible answer did Gideon's father, Joash, make?

Fourth Day

Gideon (whose other name was Jerubbaal because he had destroyed Baal's altar) gets together thousands of men to fight Midian; and then Gideon gets a surprise. Read Judges 7: 1-8.

How did Gideon first separate the brave Israelites from the cowards? How many cowards were there? Of the ten thousand left, how did he finally pick three hundred? Why do you think he chose those who lapped the water with their hands?

Fifth Day

Before the fight commences, a man has a strange dream; and Gideon tells his men of a new way of fighting. Read Judges 7: 12-18.

What was the dream? What did Gideon give the three hundred? What were they to do when the trumpet blew?

Sixth Day

Now the fight is on. Read Judges 7: 19-25.

Why did Gideon choose the time when new sentinels had just been stationed, to make his attack? How do you explain the panic of the Midianites? What did Gideon do to make the victory complete?

Seventh Day

What do you think Israel wanted to do with Gideon after his great victory over their enemy? Read Judges 8: 22, 23, 28.

What did Israel offer Gideon? What was his answer? Do you think he was right, or wrong? Why?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Gideon: Judges 6 to 8

What is the best thing that can happen to a fellow when he is doing wrong? To get punished. And why? Because it may stop his wrongdoing; for the longer he keeps up his wrongdoing, the worse off he is sure to be for it in the end.

So was it a good thing, or not, that the Midianites were giving the children of Israel a hard time for seven years? Why did God deliver Israel over to Midian (Judges 6: 1)? Just for a little healthy punishment, wasn't it,—the kind you and I need sometimes? But when God finally thought that Israel had had enough reminders for that time, whom did he pick out to be their deliverer? (Gideon.)

Now, what had been Israel's special sin? Idolatry, —worshiping idols of false gods. And what was the very first thing that God told Gideon to do? To hit that idolatry right between the eyes, so to speak, by tearing down an altar of Baal, the false god. Was this easy, or a dangerous thing to do? Some one tell us what happened the morning after Gideon's altar-smashing night. And how did Gideon get out of the difficulty?

Gideon was showing that he could be depended upon for a hard job,—even a job that might cost him his life; and the fellow who is perfectly ready to risk his life to do the thing that needs doing is the only kind of fellow that God can really use. So preparations are made for the big fight with Midian: we 'll have the story from you boys.

Why did not God want too many Israelites to go into the fight (7:2)? How did Gideon sift out the cowards first? How many were left to fight? But there were too many still, and how were *they* sifted down—to what small number? Will some one tell *why* the men who lapped the water from one hand were more dependable than those who got down on both knees and put their faces right into the water? Well, the first kind could watch and be on their guard against a surprise by the enemy, better than the others, could they not? What strange weapons did Gideon give his three hundred, and what orders? How were the Midianites frightened and put to flight?

The plan was a reasonable one. Three hundred men crept up close to the enemy, in pitch darkness, concealing their torches inside the clay pitchers; then suddenly, at a signal, they broke the pitchers and made a burst of flame with the torches, while they blew a terrific blast on the trumpets, following this with the strange war-cry, naming a new God, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." Is it any wonder Midian's camp went to pieces?

Gideon had done two pretty hard things now, but the hardest and biggest victory of his life was yet to come. What was it? Yes; it was when he declined to be king. *Think* of it, fellows! Would you like to be put to that test? What if you had the chance to be mayor, or governor, or president? It would go pretty hard to refuse, wouldn't it?

Why *did* Gideon refuse? What was his answer (8:23)? Perhaps he believed that if God had wanted him to be king, God would have told him

so, for God had told him what to do in other things. Perhaps he saw that God did not want Israel to have a king; she had never had one yet, and later, when she did have one, it only got her into trouble. *Jehovah* was the best king for Israel, Gideon said, and he said it to the folks who were clamoring: "Gideon, we want you for king." It was one of the finest bits of self-mastery in the whole Bible. It was harder than taking Jericho, for (call for Prov. 16:32 from a boy to whom you have assigned it in advance).

Now let us see how many times over Gideon was a hero!

X

THE GIANT-KILLER WHO SPARED HIS ENEMY

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

A man named Saul was the first king of Israel; he has displeased God, by disobeying, and now God picks out a young Hebrew boy to be Israel's future king. Read 1 Sam. 16: 1-13.

What was the name of the man whose son was to be the future king? What was the name of the boy finally chosen? How many older brothers had he?

Second Day

Saul is still king, though David has been chosen by God to be Saul's successor. A great war is going on between Israel and the Philistines, and a Philistine giant-bully taunts them. Read 1 Sam. 17: 1-30.

How did David happen to hear of Goliath's challenge? What did David's brother scold him for?

Third Day

But David's words reach the ears of King Saul himself; and David actually has a chance to fight the giant. Read 1 Sam. 17: 31-52.

Why was David so confident that Goliath would be whipped? What were David's weapons? Write out David's answer to Goliath (ver. 45).

Fourth Day

The people think a good deal of David after this, and Saul gets so jealous that he is dangerous to live with. Read 1 Sam. 18: 6-16.

What song was sung about Saul and David? What did Saul try to do to David?

Fifth Day

David has had to fly for his life, but Saul tries to kill him,—until a great surprise makes Saul change his mind. Read 1 Sam. 26: 1-25.

What trap did Saul fall into? Why did David refuse to kill Saul? How did David let Saul know what he had done? What honest confession did Saul make?

Sixth Day

The great day comes in David's life; Saul has died, and the people have not forgotten what David did for them. Read 1 Chron. 11: 1-9.

What two reasons did the people give for making David king? What people tried to keep David out of Jerusalem? Why was Joab made chief? Why did David grow greater and greater?

Seventh Day

David plans a great temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, and leaves it for his son to build after him. Read 1 Chron. 22: 6-16.

What was the name of David's son and successor on the throne? Why did God not wish David to build the temple himself? Find out, if you can, what the name "Solomon" means.

Teaching the Lesson in Class

David: 1 Samuel 16 to 18, 26; 1 Chronicles 11: 1-9; 22: 1-19

Is it ever right to make another fellow feel so mean that he just wants to crawl into a hole and draw the hole in after him? You think not? I'm not so sure about that. But wait a minute; let me ask you another question.

Suppose you were booked to be king; everybody liked you and wanted you for king, you had met and whipped the enemies of your nation, you were growing more popular every day—and then suddenly you found that one man, who you had thought was your friend, was against you, trying to get you out of the way, saying mean things behind your back, and actually trying to kill you! How would you feel toward *him?* And then suppose that one day, suddenly, you found this man in your power, so that you could do to him anything you wanted to: what then? You wouldn't take much for his chances?

Did you ever hear of a candidate for king having caught his enemy that way? Of course you have; we've been reading about him all the week. Who was he? What was his enemy's name? Perhaps one of you can tell the story of what happened that night in the wilderness of Ziph, where Saul had gone to hunt David. I don't know how the rest of you feel about it, but *I* don't believe David ever did anything much harder in all his life than when he spared the life of the man who was after *his* life, when he had him in his power. It wasn't the only time,

either; another such adventure is described in 1 Sam. 24: 1-22. I shouldn't be surprised if it was harder for David to do what he did in this than it was to face Goliath. Anyway, it was a giant's battle,—a fellow's fight with himself always is,—and David won; he whipped all kinds of giants. How do you think Saul felt when David treated him this way? Pretty mean? Yes. Was it right for David to spare his life? Oh, then it *is* all right to make another fellow feel mean, is it? But only when we do so by refusing to do a mean thing ourselves.

Now let's go back a little over this remarkable young fellow's life. Anybody remember what David was doing when Samuel came to Jesse's house to hunt for a new king? Was David sitting around doing nothing but waiting for a chance to be king? No, he was off *tending sheep*. Did you ever notice that the fellows who are picked for the best jobs are the ones who are hard at work making good in the jobs that they have? And that the fellows who can tell all about what they would do if they only had a chance don't seem to get the chance? I wonder why!

Does anybody know the story of Goliath? I thought so. Well, I'll give you all a chance. We shall take turns telling it, beginning at the very beginning, and each boy going on till I say to stop, when the next one will go on with it. But I will keep my Bible open, and I'll stop you if a single important point is left out.

Is it ever right to fight? What answer does the Goliath story give us? Shan't we say, "Yes, if we can safely ask God's help in the fight, and look to him for the victory"? And if we're tempted to get into

a fight that we couldn't very well pray about, hadn't we better keep out of it?

Saul nowhere showed his weakness and unfitness to be king more plainly than in his jealousy of David. It didn't hurt David a bit, but it hurt Saul awfully. Jealousy never hurts anybody but the fellow who is jealous.

It was a long, hard training that David had before God would let him be king; but that's what made him a king that amounted to something. Training always counts. David was not a perfect man; he committed some great sins, as you will see when you read his entire life some day; but one thing he never flinched in or swerved from: his single-hearted loyalty to God. And that was in a day when most people were idolaters. He was loyal to his earthly king, Saul, and to his heavenly king, God. That kind of loyalty took grit and courage and self-control. But it helped to make him a hero. Let us name everything in David's life that showed the hero-stuff.

Other Teaching Points

David probably had his old working-clothes on the day that he was anointed to be king. But God does not decide everything by clothes (1 Sam. 16:7).

It was the doing of a very ordinary duty that gave David the chance to meet Goliath (1 Sam. 17:17).

God wanted David to be himself, not somebody else, in the fight (1 Sam. 17:39, 40).

XI

A PRINCE WHO WAS HIS RIVAL'S FRIEND

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

King Saul had a son who was not afraid of the Philistines, and who once attacked them in a tremendously daring way. Read 1 Sam. 14: 1, 4, 6-17, 20-23.

Why did Jonathan believe he might whip the Philistines (ver. 6)? What was the sign Jonathan decided to follow? Who finally turned against the Philistines in this battle?

Second Day

Jonathan was the son of the king, and he had proved himself to be a fighter of great courage. He would fairly expect to be the next king, would he not? But after David had killed Goliath, and everybody was talking about David's greatness, how do you think Jonathan felt toward David? Read 1 Sam. 18: 1-4; 19: 1-7.

How did Jonathan show his love for David? Why did Saul want to kill David? What do you think of Jonathan for what he did at this time?

Third Day

Saul does not stop trying to kill David, however, and David flees for his life, while Jonathan keeps a sharp lookout. Read 1 Sam. 20: 1, 2, 18-22, 35-42.

What sign did Jonathan and David agree to use? What did it mean when Jonathan said to the lad, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?"

Fourth Day

Jonathan realizes that David is to be the next king. Does this make any difference in his friendship? Read 1 Sam. 23: 15-18.

What comforting promises did Jonathan give David?

Fifth Day

Because of Saul's wickedness, God lets the Philistines defeat him in battle; and his sons suffer with him. Read 1 Sam. 31: 1-6.

Why was Jonathan's death an honorable one, and Saul's dishonorable?

Sixth Day

Can you imagine David's bitter grief at the death of his best and dearest friend? He is loyal to his dead king Saul at the same time, even though Saul has been his enemy. Read 2 Sam. 1: 17-19, 22-27.

What did David say about Jonathan's courage? What did he say about Jonathan's love?

Seventh Day

David could never forget Jonathan's love as long as he lived, and he had a chance to repay it many years after Jonathan's death. Read 2 Sam. 4: 4; 9: 1-7.

What was the name of Jonathan's son? How was he made lame? What did David do for him?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Jonathan: 1 Samuel 13, 14; 18: 1-5; 19: 1-7; 20, 23: 15-18; 31: 1-6; 2 Samuel 1, 4: 4; 9

Has any fellow here ever had a friend? Tell us about it. Has any fellow here ever *been* a friend? Tell us about that. What is a "friend," anyway? (In this opening discussion, lead the boys to realize that a friend is one who puts the other fellow always in his own place. Our chief and only question in making friends with another person ought to be, What can we do for him? never, What can he do for us?)

Did any of you ever hear of a Bible character who was a great friend? I thought so: Jonathan. You've been living with him for a week; now I want you to tell me this: What was there for Jonathan, in being such a friend of David's? What did Jonathan get out of it? Why should he have done it? Before you try to answer, let us go over the story.

To begin with, was Jonathan a weak, cowardly sort of a chap, who thought it would be a good thing to have the friendship of such a strong, brave, successful fighter as David? How about that day when Jonathan called his armor-bearer and suggested their going down the rocky gulley and up on the other side and whipping the Philistines? Was he just a windbag when he said this, or did he mean it? What made him think he could win (1 Sam. 14: 6)? (Draw out the story of the incident from

the boys.) So Jonathan was a fighter himself, and a good one? Then he didn't need David's protection, did he?

Was Jonathan a "nobody," who had no prospects, and who thought it would be a good thing to become intimate with a popular hero like David? Well, not exactly; he happened to be the son of the king himself. What was that king's name? Who is usually the next king, after a king dies? Whom did Saul want to have king after him? Yes, Jonathan, his own son. So Jonathan needed no help from David, did he? *That* was not the reason for his friendship.

Was Jonathan unpopular with his own father, the king, and did he think he could stand in with him by making friends with his father's favorite, David? Not exactly; for Saul not only wanted Jonathan to be king, but David soon lost his favor with Saul. Moreover, the only recorded time that Jonathan made the king angry was when he was befriending David (1 Sam. 20: 30, 31).

But how did Jonathan feel toward David, and how did he act toward him? Some one read 1 Sam. 18: 1. Did Jonathan, do you think, try to get on the right side of David so that, later, he could catch him off his guard and do away with him—kill him, perhaps, and so have the throne to himself? You say Jonathan did just the opposite—*saved* David's life from Saul? A strange thing to do, wasn't it? (Draw out the arrow-shooting incident.)

We haven't answered our question yet, but we've seen what are *not* the answers. Jonathan did not seek David for a friend because he (Jonathan) was

a coward; nor because he was a nobody, and needed influence with the king; nor because he was in disfavor with the king; nor because he wanted to get David's confidence and then betray him. Jonathan knew all the time that the throne could not go to both David and himself, and that it was going to David if David lived. Did he *want* David to be king? Read 1 Sam. 23:17. But if David was out of the way Jonathan would be king. What was there in this friendship for Jonathan? What had he to gain by it?

Frankly, nothing. Jonathan had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by his friendship for David. How did it all end? Jonathan lost his life in battle, by loyalty to his father; David became king.

But wait a minute: *Did* Jonathan lose everything by his friendship for David? Did he lose in reputation? Whom do you think more of to-day, Saul, or Jonathan? The name Jonathan to-day stands for the greatest friend in history, except Jesus Christ. Did Jonathan lose in character? Did he lose in opportunity to do big things for someone else? Did he lose in self-control, in ruling his spirit—remember Prov. 16:32? Did he lose in love? Read John 15:13. There are different ways of laying down life—you don't always have to die to do it. Jonathan laid down his life for David long before he died.

So Jonathan did not lose everything, after all. But he was ready to. That is how he was a friend. No one can be a friend unless he is ready to lose everything he has for the one to whom he would be a friend. If Jonathan had tried to gain, or get, anything from his friendship, it wouldn't have been

friendship at all—only an ugly fake-friendship, a counterfeit. Friendship never tries to gain, it only tries to give. When a fellow is ready to lose everything for friendship, the Lord sees to it that he gets everything that is worth while. It is hard, of course; that is why it takes a hero to be a friend.

XII

THE KING WHO MADE A HARD CHOICE

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

The time has come for David's son Solomon to be made king. The great scene is described in 1 Kings 1: 32-40; 2: 1, 2.

What did David say should be done to show that Solomon was now king? What did the people shout? Write out David's advice to Solomon.

Second Day

Did you ever wish that you might have just one chance to choose anything in the whole world that you wanted? That chance came to Solomon. What do you think he chose? Read 1 Kings 3: 4-14.

What did Solomon choose? What did God promise to give him that he did not choose?

Third Day

God's promise of riches to Solomon, as well as wisdom, seems to have been fulfilled. Read 1 Kings 4: 20-29.

Find on the map the boundaries of Solomon's kingdom. Mention some of Solomon's provisions for a single day. How many stalls of horses had he? What had he that was better than these riches?

Fourth Day

Solomon does not forget his father's command to build a temple for Jehovah, and he calls in the best helper he can get, another king. Read 1 Kings 5: 1-6, 8, 9, 17; 6: 7, 21, 22, 38.

What king did Solomon ask to help him? Find Tyre on the map. How did Solomon arrange to have no stone cutting done in the temple? How long was the temple in building?

Fifth Day

After the great temple is finished, Solomon calls the people together, and prays. Read 1 Kings 8: 1-3, 12, 13, 44, 45; 2 Chron. 7: 1-3.

What did Solomon bring to the temple? What did he pray might bring success in battle? What answer did God make?

Sixth Day

A great queen had heard so much about Solomon that she thought she would visit him, and see for herself. Read 1 Kings 10: 1-10, 13.

How did the queen test Solomon? How did he surprise her? Mention some things she gave him.

Seventh Day

Even a king as wise as Solomon could go wrong. Read 1 Kings 11: 4-13.

Who tempted Solomon to be untrue to God? What punishment did God promise?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Solomon: 1 Kings 1 to 11; 2 Chronicles 7: 1-3

There is a story told of how each of the wise men of ancient Greece was trying to prove that he was the wisest of them all. They all told how many and how great things they knew. Finally one said quietly: "I am the wisest man in Greece; for the others all think that they know a great deal, while I am the only one who knows that he knows nothing." And that was so. Solon, who said this, probably did know more than the others in most things, but the biggest thing he knew was that all his knowledge was nothing as compared to what he might know. Did you ever notice that the more a man really knows, the less he talks about it? And the less he knows, the more he talks about it?

Does Solon remind you of Solomon at all? How? What did Solomon say when God asked him to choose whatever he would like (1 Kings 3: second half of 7th verse)? Did he mean he was really a little child? Or did he say it as Solon said it? Solomon probably had the finest education a boy of that day could have, and he was twenty years old, or more, at this time. And he had had the training of a father who was a very wise king. But what did he ask for? What would *you* have asked for? What would you ask for to-day if God said to you, "Ask what I shall give thee"? Do you think God would make that offer to a fellow that he was not pretty sure of? But wait: doesn't God make that offer to us all?

What did God think of Solomon's choice? How much wisdom did God promise him? And what three other things did God promise to give Solomon, two anyway, and the third on condition that Solomon would do God's will?

Now I want to tell you just one story of Solomon's wisdom, and see if you don't think God kept his word with him. (Tell the incident of the two mothers, 1 Kings 3: 16-28, omitting details unnecessary to an understanding of the story itself.)

What of God's other promises? Was Solomon rich? Prove it (get the class to name his possessions, 1 Kings 4: 20-29).

Did he receive honor? Who can describe the Queen of Sheba's visit (1 Kings 10: 1-10, 13)?

How did Solomon honor God? (Call out the facts of the building of the temple.)

Did Solomon's wisdom, and riches, and honor, keep him from ever going wrong? What was the cause of his wrongdoing (1 Kings 11: 4-13)? So all the wisdom in the world is not enough unless we add to it the will to do God's will.

But we must not forget Solomon's splendid choice, when it must have been so hard to choose that way. Was he a hero? Why?

XIII

THE PROPHET WHO SHAMED A GOD

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

Long after Solomon was dead a king ruled Israel who made a great (?) record for himself. Read 1 Kings 16: 29-33.

What was the name of the king? In what way did he do more than all the kings that were before him? What false god did he worship?

Second Day

But now a certain man who worshiped God dared to face King Ahab and tell him of a hard time coming. Read 1 Kings 17: 1-7.

What was the name of the man who prophesied rain? How did God take care of Elijah?

Third Day

Now that the brook had dried up, what was Elijah to do? Read 1 Kings 17: 8-16.

Why was the woman afraid she would die after eating what she had? How did God reward her for giving Elijah food?

Fourth Day

After the famine has lasted about three years, Ahab and Elijah meet face to face again. And

Elijah makes a challenge for a contest between God and Baal. Read 1 Kings 18: 16-24.

How many prophets of Baal were there? What did Elijah ask the people to decide (ver. 21)? What test did Elijah propose?

Fifth Day

Everything is made ready, and Baal has his chance to set fire to the wood. Read 1 Kings 18: 25-29.

What did the Baal-priests cry out? How did Elijah mock them? What was Baal's answer?

Sixth Day

Now it is Elijah's turn, — and God's. Read 1 Kings 18: 30-40.

How did Elijah make the test for God harder than it had been for Baal? What answer came to Elijah's prayer? What did the people say?

Seventh Day

A young man named Elisha has been chosen to take Elijah's place, and now God takes Elijah in a very strange way. Read 2 Kings 2: 7-12.

What was Elijah's last miracle? What last gift did Elisha ask of Elijah? How did Elijah go to heaven?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Elijah: 1 Kings 16: 29 to 18: 46; 19: 15-21; 2 Kings 2: 1-12

For eight hundred years God tried to teach the men of Israel a lesson that they would not learn. He began teaching it when they first came out of Egypt, at Mount Sinai; they began fighting him on it at the same place, by setting up a golden calf and worshiping it while Moses was up in the Mount worshiping God. He kept on trying to teach them the lesson, and they kept on refusing to learn it, until one day, eight hundred years after the golden calf affair, they found themselves attacked, overcome, conquered, and carried away captives by an enemy into a far land. *Then* they learned the lesson, and they have never unlearned it since. Who has guessed what lesson I mean?

Idolatry, that is it. Worshiping false gods, other gods than the only God, Jehovah, our heavenly Father. Let us repeat together the words of the lesson that God tried to teach at Mount Sinai (first and second commandments, Ex. 20: 3, 4).

I want you to remember the name of one king of Israel who was never an idolater. He had killed a giant when he was a boy. Who was he? Yes; and when the Bible says that David had a perfect heart, it does not mean that he was sinless, but that his service of God was *complete,* not divided. That is what "perfect" means. What about David's great son,—his name? Was Solomon perfect in his loyalty to God (1 Kings 11: 4-8)?

It is half a century now since Solomon was king, and Ahab is on the throne. Was his heart "perfect with Jehovah," or not? What thing did he do more than all the kings of Israel before him?

With an idol-worshiping king on the throne, what could you expect of the people? It was a hard thing that God had to do,—to swing the people away from their king's false gods and back to himself. How could he do it? Well, for one thing, he proposed to do it through one man. God always works through men, and through boys. He wants to work through you. Are you going to let him?

What was the first challenge that the one man Elijah—God's man—threw down before the idolatrous king Ahab? (1 Kings 17: 1.) It took a bold man to say even that to a king, did it not? What was back of Elijah's boldness,—was it a bluff? Tell me the story of what happened to Elijah during the three famine years.

Who remembers the second encounter of these two men, almost three years later, and Ahab's first angry word to Elijah? (18: 17.) Did Elijah's boldness hold out? He gave it to the king right between the eyes this time,—and remember, it wasn't any easier to do that then, or any less dangerous, than it would be to-day. What did Elijah say? (18: 18.)

Elijah backed up his word with a challenge, which the king just had to accept unless he was going to desert Baal. We'll have the whole Mount Carmel story, now, told by one boy after another as I call on you; and the rest of you look sharp to see that no mistakes are made, and nothing is left out.

Well, boys, what do you think of it all? Did it

take courage and nerve to do what Elijah did? Did it take more—a magnificent *faith?* I want you to remember that prayer of his,—it is one of the great prayers of the Bible. I am going to read it to you, and then I want you to read it with me, slowly, thinking what every word means (18: 36, 37). If we always prayed that way, our prayers might be answered oftener. God honors the prayer of a man who wants only strength to do God's will so that all may honor God.

Were the people fools to put any gods ahead of Jehovah, or even alongside of Jehovah? Did you ever know of a fellow who did any private—or public —idol-worshiping?

Elijah had to die, but not God, nor God's work. *That* must go right on. So God picked out a tested young man to carry on the work, just as God is doing to-day to fill his best positions. He needs men who are willing and able to shame the false gods. Such a man must always measure up to our hero-standard.

XIV

THE MAN WHO USED HIS POWER FOR OTHERS

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

Elisha has lost his chief now, but he must carry on his chief's work. He has his first experiences as a prophet. Read 2 Kings 2: 13, 14, 19-22.

What did Elisha do with Elijah's mantle? What was Elisha's second miracle?

Second Day

God sees to it that people shall understand that Elisha is God's own representative,—and some boys never get another chance. Read 2 Kings 2: 23-25.

What did the lads say to Elijah? What happened to them? Why do you think the punishment was so severe?

Third Day

Elisha is glad to use the power that God has given him to help the needy. Read 2 Kings 4: 1-7.

What was the poor woman afraid of? What was her only possession? What miracle did Elisha work for her?

Fourth Day

A rich woman was kind to Elisha, and one day

she is glad that she was. Read 2 Kings 4: 8-10, 18-21, 32-37.

What great sorrow came to this woman? What did Elisha do for her?

Fifth Day

A great general finds that Elisha is the only man who can help him. Read 2 Kings 5: 1, 9-14.

What was Naaman's disease? What remedy did Elisha prescribe? Why was Naaman angry? How was Naaman cured?

Sixth Day

Elisha wins a great victory for his king without shedding a drop of blood. Read 2 Kings 6: 8, 15-23.

Why was Elisha not afraid? How did he have the enemy at his mercy? What did he have the king of Israel do to the enemy? What was the result of this bloodless battle?

Seventh Day

Even after his death, God honors Elisha in a wonderful way. Read 2 Kings 13: 20, 21.

Where was the dead man buried? What happened when his body touched the bones of Elisha?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Elisha: 2 Kings 2 to 6; 13: 20, 21

Every one of you in this class, if he lives, must some day take up the work of some one who has gone before him. Did you ever think of that? Are you going to make a success of it—a bigger success than the one who went before,—or are you going to fail? You may not believe it, but you have been answering that question this last week. Tell me how.

Be sure of one thing: whatever you do in the world, it won't be a happen-so. Yet do you know how some people would explain the way in which Elisha got Elijah's position? Why, they 'd say that the young fellow who happened to be chosen for the place, and who happened to be with the great man at the moment of his wonderful death, happened to receive a special favor from that man, and happened to see the vision, and find the mantle, and so was lucky enough to receive the parting gift of the spirit of the man who was gone. That is the way some fellows would tell the story. They are the kind who complain of their hard luck when some one else happens to come in for a good thing. They don't realize that there is no such thing as "happen," and that their worst hard luck is in themselves!

Elisha was not the kind of man that "happens." He stuck close to his chief, ready for everything; therefore God could use him. He believed that what God was ready to do for one man, he was ready to

do for another if it was needed,—and that is a safe belief to live by. He believed that God was as much interested in his—Elisha's—success as Elisha was himself. Did you ever think of that for *your*self? That God is even more interested in your being a big success than you are yourself? For it's so. That makes it pretty important to let God have his way with you, does it not?

Did God seem to care whether the people should know that Elisha was his own special representative, or not? What swift punishment followed the time when some youngsters made fun of Elisha? (2 Kings 2: 23-25.) Was the punishment too severe? Why was it necessary?

How many of the miracles that Elisha worked can you remember? Suppose we name all that we have read about during the week. And now I am going to tell you an old Chinese legend, and see if you can guess which of Elisha's miracles it illustrates. The story goes that a great Chinese potter named Poussa had tried and failed, tried and failed, over and over again, to make a porcelain set fine enough for the Emperor's table. Finally, in despair, he flung himself into the furnace where he was glazing his masterpieces. And that was just what was needed, for china with such matchless beauty was never made before or since. That story is not true, but it teaches a truth: it pays to throw yourself hard, with all you've got, into your work. Elisha did it. In which miracle did he literally give himself to work the cure? (2 Kings 4: 34.)

Elisha knew how to test men, too. Did you ever know it is often harder to do a little thing than a

big thing? Yet God wants men who are willing to do little things when he says so,—he cannot give them big things to do unless they will do the others first. In which miracle did Elisha ask a great man to do such a little thing that the man almost lost the blessing by refusing? Remember this: the fellow who is too big for a little job that ought to be done, is not big enough for a big job.

As you look back over these miracles of Elisha, what should you say he was after, in them all; what was his purpose? Was he after glory and a great name? Was he after position? Did he want to get rich? None of those things. No; he was just out to "help the other fellow," and he seemed to think that he had a perfect right to ask God's help in doing this, even if it took a miracle now and then. We don't need miracles to-day to understand God; but we do need more men and boys like Elisha, who will live for the same purpose that he lived for. God is ready to help them as in Elisha's day. It isn't easy to live for the other fellow, is it? Why does it take a hero to do it?

XV

A CAPTIVE WHO REFUSED TO BE SCARED

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

Because the Hebrews would not obey God, he lets a foreign king conquer them. Read Dan. 1: 1-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 19, 20.

What resolve did Daniel make? Why was the prince afraid to let him try it? What was the result when Daniel and his three friends did try it?

Second Day

Do you remember an old Egyptian king who had dreams? Daniel's king has dreams, too, and they almost make serious trouble. Read Daniel 2: 1-5, 17-19.

What made it especially hard to interpret the king's dream? What was to be the penalty for failure? How did Daniel learn the dream and its meaning?

Third Day

Daniel is to be given his chance, before the king, to save his own life and that of all the wise men. Read Dan. 2: 25-28, 46-49. (If you want to read the dream and its meaning, it is in verses 31-45.)

To whom did Daniel give the credit for revealing the dream? What did the king do for Daniel?

Fourth Day

And now the king makes a command that goes hard with Daniel's three friends. What would *you* have done? Read Dan. 3: 1, 4-6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16-18.

What did the king command about the golden image? Why would not the three young Hebrews worship it? What answer did they make to the king?

Fifth Day

The king takes the young fellows at their word, and sees what stuff they are made of. Read Dan. 3: 19-30.

What shows how hot the furnace was? What did the king see in the flames? What new decree did the king now make?

Sixth Day

Daniel finally becomes so popular, under a later king, that some envious men set a trap for him—and it works! Read Dan. 6: 1-10, 13-15.

What decree did Darius make? What did Daniel do about it? Why was the king distressed?

Seventh Day

There is nothing for the king to do, he thinks, but to keep his word,—but he hopes against hope. Read Dan. 6: 16-28.

What question did the king cry out in the early morning? Why was Daniel saved? What new decree did Darius now make?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Daniel: Daniel 1 to 6

Do you know what an "Irish bull" is? I am going to give you one, in this question: *Is it safe to do our duty when it is dangerous?* But that question is not a joke; it is pretty serious sometimes. Let me explain what I mean by it.

A jailer in Georgia, whose duty it was to look after the safety of his prisoners, was faced one night by a mob of angry men who pointed their loaded rifles in his face and demanded that he break the law and turn some of the prisoners over to them. What do you think he did? What would *you* have done? Well, he did just what they told him to do, because, as the newspapers reported it next day, he "realized that resistance was useless," and that to do his duty and protect the prisoners would have been a very dangerous thing. Now you see what I mean, and I am going to ask the question again: Is it safe to do our duty when it is dangerous? Was "resistance useless" for that jailer? Would it have been safe for him to do his dangerous duty?

Twenty-five hundred years ago some handsome young fellows belonging to the best families in Judah had the same question to decide, though under entirely different circumstances. Few people criticised the Georgia jailer for shirking his duty when it was so dangerous; few would have criticised the young nobles of Judah if they had quietly yielded to the pressure that was upon them to let down a trifle

from their highest standard of duty. Let us see what their difficulty was, and what they did with it.

The Hebrew people were being taken into captivity by the Babylonians. But captivity, this time, was not so bad as it sounds; for the people were free to do about as they pleased in the new land. And if one happened to be a good-looking, healthy boy of one of the best Hebrew families, selected for special training by Nebuchadnezzar's own orders, one could very soon forget all about his own captivity. That is what Nebuchadnezzar wanted Daniel and his friends to do.

But Daniel was evidently the kind of fellow who didn't propose to forget all about his home training and what he knew was right and wrong. What was the first thing in which he was put to the test?

Pretty dangerous, wasn't it, to decline to eat and drink what the king tells you to? Yet how did it come out, with Daniel and his three friends?

Good so far; what was the next affair that almost got them into trouble, and this time through no fault of their own? A king's dreams. Tell me the story of that. How did Daniel show up this time?

But they had not begun to have a taste of real trouble yet; now Daniel's three friends are going to be put to the test without him. We 'll have the story of the golden image. Yes; and does it make you think of that jailer in Georgia, who "realized that resistance was useless," and that duty-doing was too dangerous to be considered? Is a rifle-bullet any more dangerous than that fiery furnace was?

Now it's Daniel's turn again. He is not a boy any longer, but a full-grown man, one of the three presi-

dents of the empire. He doesn't seem to have lost much yet by his bold stand for the right. But a strong, clean man is never popular with the grafters, so a plot is hatched. What was it?

Daniel could have prayed inside his room, away from the window, so that no one could see him. Why didn't he do so? Will some one read aloud 1 Kings 8: 46-49? You see, the *best* way of praying that Daniel knew anything about was to pray openly, toward Jerusalem. And he felt that the best way to do a thing was good enough for him—nothing else was. Do we always decide that way? Did you ever hear of a fellow who tumbled into bed at night, when he was very tired, and said his prayers in bed, instead of the best way, kneeling?

To be sure, it was awfully dangerous for Daniel to do this. But what of that? Honestly now, boys, what has danger to do with duty? It makes it hard; but is danger ever an excuse for not doing your duty? Daniel did not seem to think so.

God wanted to save Daniel's life, so he shut the lions' mouths. Suppose God had not wanted Daniel to live any longer, but had had work for him to do in heaven, and the lions had finished him up that night? Would you have thought any less of Daniel? Wouldn't it have been a pretty good way to die?

As a matter of fact, there is never any real danger in duty-doing. You may lose your life by it; but it is more dangerous to live than to die when God wants you to die and when life must be saved by cowardice. But as a rule, God sees to it that men who put duty above danger are saved, as were Daniel and his friends who refused to be scared.

That Georgia jailer did *not* know that resistance was useless; he only let himself be scared into *thinking* it was. If he had said to the mob, "You'll have to shoot me first," they probably would not have fired on him. A crowd of cowardly lynchers, who will hang a criminal, think twice before they shoot down a brave jailer. On the other hand, if the man had bravely lost his life, it might have put an end to lynching in that state for all time. Any way you look at it, he lost, and lost heavily, by thinking that duty was so dangerous that it need not be done. Living or dead, the duty-doer always wins. But a living coward is a sure loser.

XVI

THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT USE SOLDIERS

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

After Israel and Judah had been conquered, the great temple at Jerusalem was destroyed. But a good Persian king decides to let some of the Jews go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Read Ezra 1 : 1-4.

What was the Persian king's name? In what way did the king order men to help in the rebuilding of the temple?

Second Day

Many people are back in Jerusalem, and the temple worship is begun again, as they get ready to rebuild. Read Ezra 3 : 1-7.

What feast did the people keep? What kind of wood did they get, and from where?

Third Day

After the temple was rebuilt, and another Persian king was reigning, a learned Jew gets permission to return to Jerusalem. Read Ezra 7 : 1-6.

What was the new king's name? In what was Ezra a "ready scribe"?

Fourth Day

Ezra gets a valuable letter from the king,—his "credentials." Read Ezra 7: 11-18, 21, 25.

How did the king show his confidence in Ezra? What did the king say about the law of God?

Fifth Day

Now that he is about to pass through a dangerous country, Ezra does a strange thing. Read Ezra 8: 21-23.

What did Ezra do at the river Ahava? What did he *not* ask the king for? Why?

Sixth Day

He has a very business-like arrangement with some of the priests. Read Ezra 8: 24-34.

What did he give twelve chiefs of the priests charge of? What were they to do with this? Why was the dangerous journey so safely made?

Seventh Day

At Jerusalem, Ezra carries out the command of his king. Read Neh. 8: 1-3, 5-8.

Why did the people gather themselves together? How long did Ezra read to them? How did the readers make sure that the people understood?

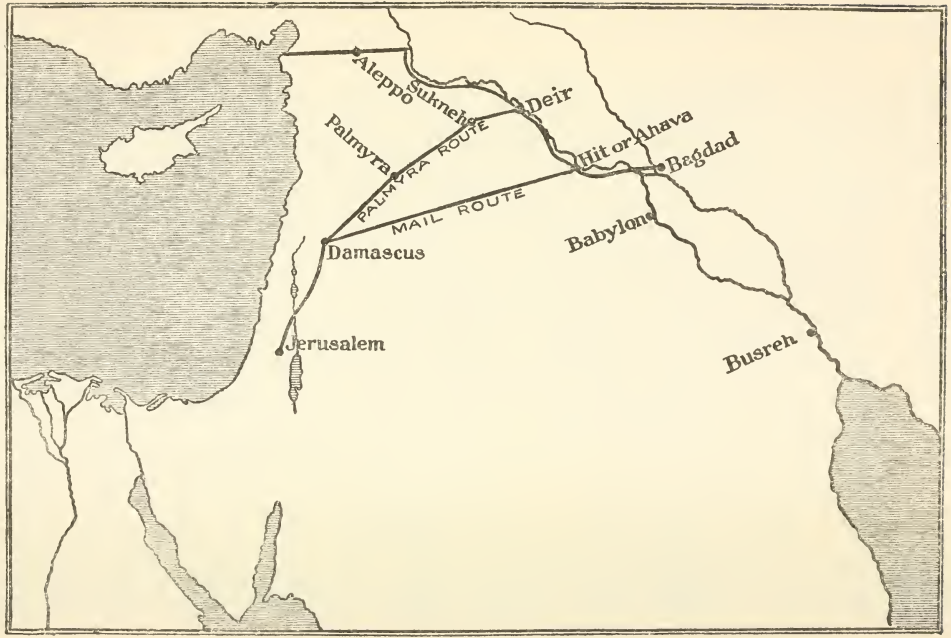
Teaching the Lesson in Class

Ezra: Ezra 1, 3, 7, 8; Nehemiah 8

You remember I said there was a famous Yale baseball pitcher, named Stagg, who was commonly reported to make it his practice to pray before going into a game. I never heard of his denying this, nor of his being ashamed of it. The fellows in college did not seem to think any the less of him for it.

But have you ever known of any one who happened to be carrying a Bible on the street, or in a trolley car, feeling just a little ashamed to have it seen, and trying to slip it out of sight,—especially if it was on a week-day? Have you ever known of any one feeling a little embarrassed at being unexpectedly discovered on his knees in prayer? Honestly, boys, which are you most likely to be ashamed of: your intimacy *with* God, or your willingness to get along *without* God? Of course, it's easy to use our Bibles, and talk about trusting God, and even to pray, here in this class, or on Sunday; is it just as easy to let folks know what we think of God, out on the street, or in school, or in business?

There was a man who lived about twenty-three hundred years ago, who was ashamed in rather an unusual way. It was more than fifty years after the temple had finally been rebuilt at Jerusalem. The Jews who had gone back from captivity to Jerusalem were getting careless, and were neglecting the temple worship. Something needed to be done. And so this man, who was a Jew, although he lived



Ezra's Journey from Babylon to Jerusalem

seven hundred miles from Jerusalem, determined to do something even if he had to get a king to help him. What was the man's name? The king's name? (Ezra 7:1.)

Would you say that the king, Artaxerxes, had much confidence in Ezra, or not? What kind of "credentials," or letter, did he give him? (7:21, 25.)

Now a seven-hundred mile journey is a good run even to-day, on an express train, but think what it must have been before there were any railroads! Here is an outline map that shows the journey. At Ahava, now called Hit, Ezra assembled his company of travelers. Thence he might have gone directly across the desert to Damascus, or a little north to Palmyra, but those routes are such difficult and dangerous ones that he probably moved northward first, along the shore of the Euphrates River. This country was a paradise, with plenty of fruit and gardens.

But after a week of that they came to Deir, turned to the southwest, and struck the barren desert. Three days more brought them to Sukneh, where they refilled their skin bags with water, and then had four days' hard march to Palmyra. Here they were past the worst of their journey; but it was still four days to Damascus, and then a week or more through the land of Palestine to Jerusalem.*

Who remembers what it was that Ezra says he was ashamed to do, while they were at Ahava, facing the terrible desert journey with all its dangers from bloodthirsty enemies? (8:21-23.) Yes; ashamed to ask the king for soldiers to protect them on the

*This route and the facts are given by Dr. Edgar James Banks in The Sunday School Times of October 28, 1905.

way. And why? Was it because he had already asked the king for so much? No, indeed. It was simply because he had said that God could take care of them, and he was ashamed to seem to distrust God.

God honored Ezra's confidence in him, and saw them safely through. And the thing I want you to remember Ezra for, is the fact that he was *ashamed to seem to doubt God,* and that he would not use soldiers on that account. That's a pretty good kind of shame to have.

This does not mean that we ought never to use soldiers, or to protect ourselves. Sometimes God wants us to do just that, and to refuse would be to doubt him. But in this particular case, Ezra knew that God's reputation was at stake with this other nation that did not understand God's power; and Ezra would not do anything that might seem like doubting God's power. It must have been hard. But it was worth while. What is a hero?

XVII

A WALL-BUILDER WHO KEPT HIS WITS ABOUT HIM

HOME WORK FOR THE PUPILS

First Day

A loyal Jew who holds high position in the court of Persia makes an urgent request of his king. Read Neh. 1: 1-4, 11; 2: 5-8.

What news about Jerusalem did Nehemiah learn? What was his official position? What permission did the king give him?

Second Day

The Jews have enemies round about Jerusalem, and Nehemiah has to work carefully. Read Neh. 2: 9-20.

What time did Nehemiah choose to make his first study of the walls of Jerusalem? In what condition did he find the walls? What did he plan to do?

Third Day

Nehemiah evidently believes it is well to "trust God, and keep your powder dry." Read Neh. 4: 6-9, 15-23.

Why were Nehemiah's enemies angry? What careful plan did Nehemiah have to protect his people? What showed that he was not afraid of hard work?

Fourth Day

His enemies are wise as foxes and do their best to trap Nehemiah. Read Neh. 6: 1-4, 10-13.

How did they first try to get Nehemiah in their power? What final plan did they try?

Fifth Day

Finally Nehemiah's enemies get a sad disappointment and setback. Read Neh. 6: 15-19.

Why were the enemies cast down? What enemies within Judah were on Tobiah's side?

Sixth Day

Even after the walls had been finished, there was need of great watchfulness. Read Neh. 7: 1-4; 13: 10-14.

In what way did they watch against the enemy? What did Nehemiah find had been neglected by the people?

Seventh Day

One more thing that was going wrong Nehemiah put a stop to. Read Neh. 13: 15-22.

In what ways had the Sabbath been broken? How did Nehemiah put a stop to business on the Sabbath? What is the Fourth Commandment?

Teaching the Lesson in Class

Nehemiah: Nehemiah 1 to 7: 4; 13

Some people have an idea that if a man is religious, you need not expect much else from him; that religion is a substitute for brains, and push, and courage, and alert, all-round ability. What do you think of that theory? Can a fellow have religion and all those other things, too? Name some of the brightest, most successful men in town. Are any of them religious men? (Be sure to have some names ready yourself, if the class cannot suggest any, of business leaders who are active Christian workers.)

Yes, religion and true success—which doesn't always mean getting rich—go together; it's a question whether either one amounts to much without the other. It is so to-day, and it has been so ever since the days of that successful old boat-builder who dared to take ridicule. And one of the best cases of this is the last "man who dared" in our series: a king's favorite, a brilliant, wealthy young man of affairs, whom you and I have been visiting with for a week. What was his name? We began our hero-series with a boat-builder; we are going to end it with a wall-builder. The two men were a good deal alike.

Nehemiah had things all his own way in his palace life at Shushan. Riches, and position, and the king's favor—what more could you want? But he was a Jew, loyal to the old home-country; and he put some things higher than a good time in life. A dozen

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years had passed since Ezra's march to Jerusalem. Nehemiah got news from Jerusalem; what was it? (Neh. 1:1-3.) Some men would have said: "What of it? Let the Jews who are there look after their own city,—it's no affair of mine." Not Nehemiah. If things were going wrong that he might make right, then he felt that it was time for him to get to work. But to do so meant letting all his court life and good times go.

You know how he worked it. It wasn't easy to get leave of absence for a cross-desert journey to Judah. First he prayed about it. Then he kept on praying. He was the kind of fellow who is willing to wait. After three months or so of praying and waiting, his chance came with the king's question. He flashed up another silent prayer to God before he answered, and then, you know, he told the whole story; and the king let him go.

That was only the beginning. Perhaps you can tell me the story of what happened after Nehemiah reached Jerusalem. What enemies were on hand? How did Nehemiah show his shrewdness in his first reconnoitre? (2:12.)

What plan of campaign was followed in this wall-building? If you need to refresh your memories, look at Nehemiah 4:9, 13, 16-23. The man who doesn't even take off his clothes at night means business, doesn't he?

The enemies were no fools, and they would probably have caught any one less alert and brainy than Nehemiah. What two different traps did they set for him?

Nehemiah began his big campaign, back in Persia,

how? With prayer. What do we find him doing at the last? (13:15-22.) Standing up solidly for Sabbath-keeping. So it is fair to say that religion had a pretty big place in his life, is it not? But he didn't make his religion an excuse for laziness, or carelessness; he trusted as though it all depended on God, and he worked as though it all depended on himself. That is the kind of religion God wants us to have. It is the kind that makes hero-stuff,—that will see us safely through all the hard things in life that are worth while.

XVIII

SIXTEEN MEN WHO DARED

Home Work for the Pupils

(The Bible references given are not to be read in full every day, but the answer to each question can be found somewhere in the Bible passage that follows it.)

First Day

What do you believe was the hardest thing that Noah had to do? Gen. 6 to 8.

What act do you think best showed Abraham's unselfishness? Gen. 12 to 14; 18.

Second Day

What incident in Isaac's life took most self-control? Gen. 22, 26.

When did Jacob first realize the folly of fighting God? Gen. 32.

Third Day

Why did Joseph rise steadily to the top, in spite of "bad luck"? Gen. 37, 39, 40 to 42.

Mention one "impossible" thing that Moses did. Ex. 2, 3, 14.

Fourth Day

What great military victory did Joshua win? Josh. 1, 3, 6.

What do you think was the hardest thing Gideon did? Judges 6, 7, 8: 22, 23.

Fifth Day

How did David show his loyalty to his king? 1 Sam. 26.

How did Jonathan prove his friendship for David? 1 Sam. 23: 15-18.

What was the hard choice that Solomon made? 1 Kings 3: 4-14.

Sixth Day

What act of daring showed Elijah's trust in God? 1 Kings 18.

Mention several ways in which Elisha helped others. 2 Kings 2, 4, 5.

Seventh Day

In what ways did Daniel and his three friends show that they would not be scared into doing wrong? Dan. 3, 6.

Why was Ezra ashamed to ask his king for soldiers? Ezra 8.

How did Nehemiah's watchfulness twice save his life? Neh. 6.

How to Make the Review the Best Lesson of All.

To the Teacher.—You and your class have been climbing up the side of a mountain for the past four months. Now you have come to the summit, where you can stop and look back over the steep climb already made, and get a landscape-view that you could not have had at any point on the way. The summit-view ought to be the best view of all. It is hoped that by utilizing one or more of the plans that follow, your class may find it so.

The Training Review

In college, the height of a good many fellows' ambition is to get a seat at the training-table. What is that? It is the eating club or boarding place of any of the various athletic teams that defend the honor of the college in public contests with other colleges. At the training-table the best and most nourishing food that money can buy is served, and plenty of it. But to have the right to eat at that table means a pretty stiff kind of life between meals. It means *training,* all the time: rigid self-sacrifice, no stimulants, no narcotics, no late hours, exhausting exercise, self-control in mind and temper as well as in body,—and perhaps being left off the "team" at the last moment, after all. Yet ten men are eager for a chance to undergo all this training for every one man that is successful in winning the privilege. Do you wonder why?

We're going to take up a story of training to-day, and see how sixteen sturdy old heroes were trained

in even a harder school than that of a college team: what their training was, how they stood it, and what it made of them.

After some such introduction as that, take up the heroes, one by one, and get the class to point out the great test or tests to which each man was put, as part of his training, how he stood it, and what the result was in the man's character. Isaac's tests were the boy-sacrifice and the well-digging incident; Moses, the Red Sea trap and others; and so on.

The Word-Picture Review

Paint a word-picture as graphically as you can, mentioning no names, but making the scene and the action vivid, interesting, and unmistakable. For example: It is midnight, and two men are locked in each other's arms, their muscles hard and tense, their veins swollen with the awful strain, neither gaining any advantage as they try to throw each other, when suddenly one touches the thigh of the other, and his leg goes out from under him. Who are they? What did the beaten one do after he was crippled? Why was it the best thing he could do?

Again: a man goes out of his house in the early morning, before daylight, and hurries to the edge of a deep dungeon. Leaning far over, he peers down, but he can see nothing except gleaming yellow eyes and great restless tawny bodies moving back and forth. Who is he? What is he afraid he will find? What does he cry out?

Use your imagination just as much as you can in making these pictures. You will need to practice

them aloud at home, going over the details carefully, to make such a review as interesting as it ought to be. To use the pictures in class, let one boy whom you name have first chance to answer, all others keeping still; if he misses, pass it on to the next in order, and so on. A score can be kept, if you wish, to see who makes the best record—and so in the other plans that follow.

An Actual Picture Review

For this, you will simply have the set of lesson-pictures* and show them, one by one, concealing the lettering, letting the boys have opportunities, by turn, to say what character is connected with the picture. This review could fairly be used only in a class that has used the pictures during its study.

A Review by Characteristics and Qualities

Who was the most unselfish man of the lot? (Jonathan.) Which one seemed to think most about helping others by his miracles? (Elisha.) Which one was the hardest to scare? (Daniel.) Which one was the most patient? (Noah.) Which one was the best peacemaker? (Isaac.) Which one was the trickiest? (Jacob.) Similarly, set the boys' wits to working by questions that make demands on their ability to give thoughtful estimates of the men.

Filling in Parallel Columns

Every man's life is a plan of God, and everything we do either helps to carry out God's plan for us, or

*See page xii.

mars it. Get the class to decide what the heroes did for and against God's plans for their lives. Rule a piece of foolscap paper and fill it in so that it will look like this, at the top:

God's Plan Helped by	How?	God's Plan Marred by	How?

The pupils will decide whether Noah helped or marred, and wherein, and his name and act will be filled in accordingly,—"Noah" in the first column, "building ark" in the "How" column. Sometimes a man both marred and helped, as Jacob, marring by his deception, helping finally by his surrender.

A Geography Review

Use a large sketch map, drawn on blackboard or tablet, containing no names. Let the teacher, or better still a pupil, locate and fill in places as they are given by pupils in connection with the different heroes that may be called for. For example, the teacher says "Jacob," and the pupil whose turn it is

names Bethel, or Jabbok, and locates it, and so on, until all the places connected with Jacob's life have been given and correctly located.

Or vice versa. The teacher or a pupil fills in on the map the name of a place, and asks what person was connected with that place.

The Review by Blanks

Tell the story aloud in class of some incident in the life of one of the heroes, coming to a sudden stop at an important point, it being understood that the boy whose turn it is must fill the blank by naming the missing word. For example: "When David told Saul that he would like to fight Goliath, Saul wanted David to wear ————. But David finally took with him only ————." And so on.

A Review Game

Prepare cards, in advance, each card containing some question, or word-picture, or description of a situation (like "men and priests marching around a city"), that will enable the thoughtful pupil to identify one of the sixteen characters. There can be more than sixteen cards, as you can have several different veiled references to each character.

In class, let the pupils draw one card at a time, face down, until each one has as many cards as you think best; then let one turn up his top card, and, reading aloud what is on it, try to name the man to which it refers. If he misses, let the one next to him answer, and so on, until the one who correctly locates that lesson keeps the card. Then another card is turned up by the next pupil in order, and the

plan is repeated. Whoever has the most cards after all have been answered "wins the game." To make it very simple, let the pupils all have the list of chapter titles before them as they play this game.

A "Conquering the Impossible" Review

Run through the entire sixteen characters, letting the class decide what "impossible" things were done, and by whom,—such as the crossing of the Red Sea, the crossing of Jordan, the defeat of Baal, and so on.

A "Minority Report" Review

The majority are usually wrong. If a fellow holds fast to the right, he is likely to be in the minority, as Joshua and Caleb were among the spies. Get the class to determine what each man of the sixteen did which most people—the majority—would not have done; in other words, wherein each hero was in the minority by doing right, and what most people would have done—and wrongly—under the same circumstances.

A Written Review

A written review is not nearly so formidable as it sounds, and is one of the most effective methods. Here are some points to observe, out of the experience of a well-known Sunday-school superintendent:

Call it a written review, not an examination.

Have every pupil supplied with paper and a sharpened pencil.

Make most of the questions encouragingly easy, instead of forbiddingly hard.

Dictate the questions slowly, clearly, and assure every one that there is no hurry.

And here are a few questions of the sort that might be used:

How many sons had Noah?

For what cities that God was going to destroy did Abraham pray?

What was the name of the man who kept on digging wells, and would not fight, after his enemies had filled up his wells?

How did Joseph finally get out of prison?

(For those who desire it, a written examination in this and other Bible courses is conducted every year by the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations. Full particulars will be sent upon request. Address Religious Work Department, 124 East 28th Street, New York.)

Whatever method of review is used, let it be determinedly made the opportunity of bringing once more before the class the sterling qualities of unflinching heroism that made these men immortal. And let there be no doubt in the minds of any—let this be your last word to the boys—that the same kind of heroism is needed in the world to-day, and that there is plenty of it in lives all around us, if we could only see as God sees. May we ourselves get into the Honor Roll of Heroes, by looking to the Captain of our Salvation, day by day, for strength to do the hard things that are worth while!

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